

OCTOBER 12  
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# NEW MASSES

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## WHAT ABOUT ROOSEVELT?

*by A. B. Magil*

## THEY FOUGHT FOR THEIR COUNTRY

*by Mikhail Sholokhov*

## THE LIMITS OF AIR POWER

*by Emory Falk*

## MIDWEST NOTES

*by Joseph North*

## THE POETS REPLY: A SYMPOSIUM

*Norman Rosten, Don Gordon, Lawrence Barth, Osmond Beckwith*

*IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Puerto Rico and the Philippines; Policy for Italy.*

# BETWEEN OURSELVES

EDITOR Joseph North, who has been doing the country once over lightly (all too lightly because of those twin obstacles—time and money), will reach Los Angeles sometime this week. We address this information to all our readers but especially to our readers on the West Coast who have always wanted to meet an editor of NM now and then to discuss some of the problems of the magazine. Such readers add up to a goodly number, and arrangements have been completed for Joe North to meet as many of our friends as possible. Accordingly, there will be an NM readers' conference in the banquet room of the Hotel Clark, 426 South Hill Street, Los Angeles, Friday night, October 15. There will be no admission fee, and Los Angeles readers are requested to bring those of their friends who have as yet had no contact with NM.

TALKING about reader reaction to NM, this week's mail on the discussion about the merits of our "Spotlight" section is heavily in favor of continuing the department. We can't tell from this whether the idea finds preponderant favor with our readers or whether the "critics" are bashful. At any rate, we quote in part from two letters asking us by all means to maintain the status quo. From Baltimore, K.S. would like "to register a very emphatic vote in favor of the NM spotlight. For those of us who live away from New York, it serves as an invaluable summary. . . ." Miss L.M., from Los Angeles, writes: "I've just been reading the NM Spotlight for July 17 (I always read it first or I feel I started all wrong), and I realize I just couldn't go on feeling grateful for NM without telling you fellas how I feel. It's the gratitude you feel when Mr. J. H. Lawson gets through speaking and you say, see! that's what I've been meaning all along, but never quite thought out. . . . I'd rather read novels than newspapers and it tickles me how I like to read NM better than novels. It's like eating vitamins and suddenly finding out that they taste good. . . ."

There are several more letters in that vein. We'd also like to hear from the "opposition." We promise all sides a fair hearing.

The week's mail also brought a somewhat admonishing note from a reader who wants to know why we hide Richard Boyer's column on page twenty-three. That is no way to treat a man who can write rings around some of

our great liberals, the writer points out. In reply let us hasten to say we are happy indeed to know that our enthusiasm for Dick Boyer is shared by our readers. (Incidentally, the September 25 issue of the Raleigh, N.C. *Carolinian*, a Negro paper, cites with high praise Boyer's column in our July 20 issue entitled "We, Too, Are Guilty.") But we confess that the letter rather startled us. Every publication must to a certain extent be departmentalized, and the place we have allotted to our columnists, Dick Boyer and Joe North, is not at all intended to conceal their talents. It so happens that all of our feature material is placed toward the back of the book. But we know that many readers ignore our arrangement and turn to the back first. Our own opinion is that whichever way you read NM, from the front to the rear, vice versa, or hop, skip and jump, you're sure to find much that's worth while.

WE HAVE been confronting our patient and understanding readers with the need for more and more subscribers, and this assault upon their time is beginning to show results. The response to our reader-subscription drive is most heartening. Believe it or not, that

elusive but most substantial commodity known as morale, has its dark days within our staff as it has everywhere else, and when a healthy example of reader support comes to our ears, the effect is indeed salutary. We pass on to you one such example. One of our subscribers decided last Sunday to overcome the effects of the sedentary life with a little bike riding. As she rode along, she pondered the evils of the world, and decided after a while that riding the bike, per se, was sheer frivolity. Why not, since it was so easy to get from place to place, visit people for a purpose—to sell some NM subs, for instance? The upshot of such sound thinking was—three new subs for the magazine.

IT is necessary, as you know, to expedite the work of the post office by zoning all mail. Not being thoroughly familiar with all the towns in which our readers live, we are asking all subscribers to notify us of the zone in which they are located. May we expect a postcard with this information soon?



## NEW MASSES

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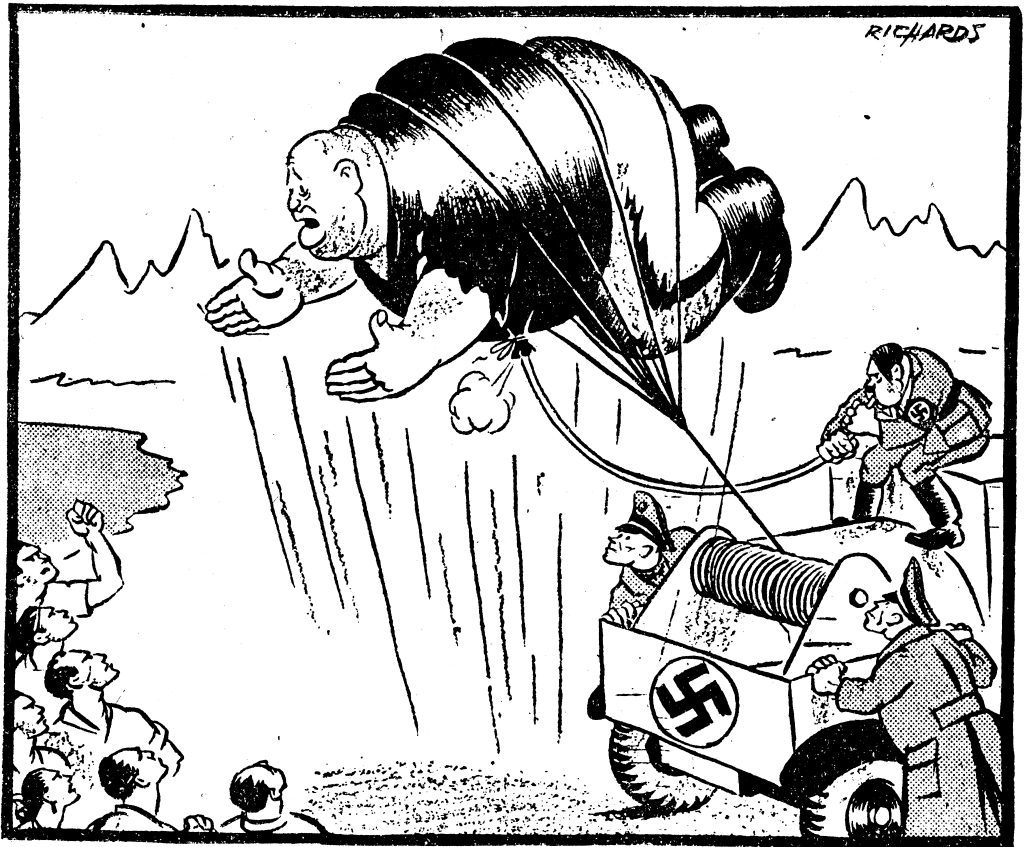
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# NM SPOTLIGHT

## Policy for Italy

**N**AZI-RAVAGED Naples has fallen and the Allied armies push upward into the peninsula. Victor Emmanuel in a broadcast urges Italians to follow him while he gently criticizes those "valorous soldiers" who foment civil war on behalf of Mussolini's ghost republic. General Eisenhower has met with Marshal Badoglio to discuss Italy's status. And still there is no clearly delineated American policy. No effort of any consequence has been made to rouse Italians to take a leading part in the establishment of a democratic government. The trend thus far has been to make Badoglio a political magnetic center; to reinforce Badoglio as the exclusive chief without regard for the liberal and progressive figures who fought fascism for two decades before Badoglio joined the opposition. The dominating issue is to weld Italians against the Nazis, and if Badoglio can achieve this objective the Italian National Front will support him. But it must be done on the solid foundation of a government which, according to the Milano Liberta radio, "will have the confidence of the people and will unite all the free and healthy elements in the nation."

In the Anglo-American conception of liberating Italy military calculations are ostensibly foremost. But this limited emphasis deprives our armies of all the assistance the Italian people can give them. It is as though many divisions of troops are available to us, but are discarded because some officials in London and Washington fear Italian democracy and fear the leaders, in Italy and abroad, who can provide the spark to kindle the Italian flame. In effect, alleged military considerations are perhaps the means of obscuring the political considerations which dominate tory minds. Whatever settlement is made in Italy will be scrutinized by the peoples of Europe as a yardstick of their own fate. Before some sense was knocked into prissy negotiators we committed horrible blunders in dealing with the French liberation movement. To repeat them again with Italians will not help in erasing the suspicion that the Atlantic Charter is another scrap of paper. There is but one test of how meticulously an army of liberation and the governments it represents fulfill their political obligations—and that is the extent to which they collaborate with genuine people's forces everywhere. In Italy we have yet to show that we understand who our natural allies are.



"I have resumed supreme direction of fascism in Italy"—Mussolini, Sept. 15

## The Real Partisans



**W**E ARE happy to see that even at this late date some measure of credit is being given General Tito's Partisan Army for its successful assaults against the Wehrmacht in Yugoslavia. But unfortunately for every note of recognition there is one to balance it with praise for Mikhailovitch. That myth is a long time in dying and were it not for the Yugoslav government-in-exile it might have been buried months ago. Speaking from the government's new seat in Cairo, King Peter observed regal amenities by announcing that he recognized no distinctions between the tavern general and Tito. To place Mikhailovitch on the same footing with the Partisan commander may be one way of hurdling an extremely embarrassing issue, but it will not go well with the fighting Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Mikhailovitch is as different from Tito as an Al Capone is from an Eisenhower. The Yugoslav minister of war (the title Mikhailo-

vitch retains) continues his marauding of the Partisan Army and it was only a few weeks ago that his men murdered Dr. Sima Milosevitch, a member of the executive committee of the People's Liberation Assembly; assassinated the distinguished Croatian poet and patriot, Gorna Kovacevich, as well as the anti-fascist Serb, Dr. Deajn Popovich. At no time has the Yugoslav government investigated these and other crimes, and the suspicion grows that the government countenances them as a matter of state policy.

While Mikhailovitch engages in fratricidal warfare (he has openly admitted that he is not doing anything else), the Partisan Army is clearing the Adriatic coast of Nazis and preparing for joint operations with Allied troops. According to London reports it has crossed the border into Austria. Thus far the Partisans have retaken an area roughly the size of Switzerland. This is a remarkable achievement. For it means that the Germans have had to pay for their occupation with the lives of thousands of their best equipped Balkan soldiers. Some observers even estimate that the Partisans have killed

as many Germans, if not more, as did British and American forces in North Africa, Sicily, and now Italy. It would be small repayment of the huge debt we owe our Yugoslav allies if Washington officially recognized them and gave Fotich, Peter's ambassador to this country, his walking papers to rejoin the senile pensioners at Cairo who call themselves a government.

## Browder's Speech



EARL BROWDER'S speech at Chicago, which was repeated at Gary, Ind., is a searching discussion of the crisis of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition, set in the framework of American national interests. Once again he pointed out that it was Winston Churchill who at Quebec stood fast against an immediate second front, overriding the opinion of President Roosevelt and Generals Marshall and Eisenhower. Washington correspondents—if not the newspapers for which they write—are aware that this was the case. And Browder called attention to the grave implications of the position taken by American defeatists and other opponents of the second front, who argue that this is a special Russian demand and that we are doing our share by sending lend-lease supplies. "It means that we write ourselves off as a world power," he said. "It means that we will cease pretending that we have any interests in Europe or Asia that anyone is bound to respect." And the failure to consolidate our alliance with Britain and the Soviet Union on the basis of playing our full part in the war, he argued, means furthermore that no durable peace will be possible.

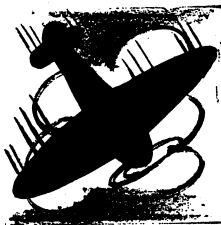
In the same realistic spirit Browder discussed the war in the Far East. Talk about the Soviet Union giving us bombing bases against Japan, he declared, is an attempt to get her to win the war for us in Asia as well as in Europe. While attacking this "harmful nonsense," he nevertheless emphasized that "it still remains a basic truth that our close friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union is an absolute necessity for the final and satisfactory solution of the Far Eastern phase of the war. . . ."

IT OCCASIONED no surprise that this speech by an outstanding American patriot stuck in the craws of the Nazi-lovers and sedition-mongers of the Hearst-McCormick-Patterson axis. They ignored the main point of Browder's address and devoted front-page headlines to garbled accounts of that portion which dealt with the Far Eastern phase of the war. And what he had to say on that subject they presented not as his opinion, but as an official pronouncement

from Moscow, though they know that Browder can no more speak for Moscow than any other American citizen, and does not profess to speak for it. In other words, these newspapers did the kind of job on Browder that they recently did on General Marshall—and President Roosevelt minced no words the other day in describing the kind of job that was.

It was to be expected that the *New York Times*, which in recent days has made itself ridiculous by pontifical editorial pronouncements on the second front that have been contradicted by its own news columns, could not resist adding its mite to that discreditable chorus. But what impels win-the-war papers like the *New York Herald Tribune* and *PM* to rise to the defeatist bait? Of the *Herald Tribune* editorial it can at least be said that it refrained from echoing the garbled versions of Browder's speech and confined itself to taking issue with what he said concerning the differences that developed at Quebec. *PM's* contribution was on a distinctly lower level. John P. Lewis' attempt to blame Mr. Browder for the fact that the Hearst press distorted his words is a rather curious exhibition for the editor of a paper which has itself been the victim of the same kind of distortion.

## Air Feud



PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has injected some much needed sanity into the discussion of postwar aviation. Both here and in Britain this problem has been overlaid by thick clouds of mutual suspicion behind which big business groups have maneuvered for exclusive advantage. The British fear that American aviation companies, whose operations have been enormously expanded by the war, will dominate postwar commercial aviation and squeeze them out of their most profitable positions. This fear is enhanced by the fact that American companies are today producing for war purposes some 15,000 cargo planes a year which can be used for peacetime passenger transport, whereas British interests have had to confine themselves to the manufacture of bombers and fighters. In the United States, on the other hand, there is much eyeing of bases in areas of the world under British control; at the same time a struggle is developing between Pan-American Airways, which before the war ruled the overseas field, and sixteen domestic lines that as a result of the war have sprouted world-wide wings and want to keep them when the fighting is over.

This whole controversy has provided strong temptations to imperialist-minded politicians, often with defeatist leanings, to

fan the fires of discord between the United States and Britain, to the detriment of the war effort. The chief burden of Rep. Clare Boothe Luce's "globaloney" speech was an attack on Vice-President Wallace's pleas for international freedom of the air. And now a five-man senatorial delegation has returned from a globe-girdling tour of the war fronts all hot and bothered over the alleged fact that the United States will six months after the war lose the right to use foreign air fields it has developed. The McCormick-Patterson press has of course jumped at this "issue" which is up its defeatist alley.

It was by way of reply to these senators that President Roosevelt at a press conference last week urged world-wide freedom of the air and free reciprocal use of air bases, with each country controlling its internal aviation. Ownership of the bases was unimportant, he pointed out. He also said that Prime Minister Churchill had informally agreed on this policy. Of course, the President was merely stating general principles which need to be worked out in detail. But it is of the utmost importance that both he and Churchill have agreed to view the problems of postwar aviation in terms of peaceful international cooperation and not in terms of those cutthroat rivalries which can convert the airways into the road to a new world war.

## First Round

IT WAS a cheering spectacle to watch Rep. E. E. Cox—elected by one percent of his district's population—beat his chest and tearfully resign from the chairmanship of the congressional "investigation" of the Federal Communications Commission. The resignation came about eight months too late; but it still marked one of the worst defeats for the poll tax bloc in years. Leaving aside the maudlin and disgusting praise showered on Cox by Speaker Rayburn and Majority Leader McCormack, the gentleman from Georgia deserves recognition only for his consistent Red-baiting, his friendship for Dies and every other reactionary and defeatist, his slurs against the Negro people, his frank anti-Semitism, his hatred of the President, and his opposition to all legislation that by the widest stretch of the imagination could be considered remotely helpful to the war effort.

For all Cox' self-justification, he wangled his infamous committee only after the FCC had charged him with violating the federal law by accepting a \$2,500 fee from a radio station for intervening in its behalf before the FCC. Cox responded by blackmailing and bludgeoning the agency



that dared expose him. Great credit must be accorded Chairman James L. Fly, Commissioner Durr, and other FCC members for refusing to be bullied. Quite logically, the radio chains expected Cox to keep the FCC so busy that the Commission would be unable to prevent new monopolistic incursions on the communications industry; the chains grew bolder in their censorship of commentators who support the war policies of the administration, and arrogantly banned labor from the air. But the Commission, backed by public opinion, proved stronger than Cox and the czars of industry. The first round goes to the people—but the fight must continue until Cox stands trial for violation of the law, and until a halt is put to the Cox-inspired "investigation" which still has as its purpose the destruction of a useful government agency.

### How Long?



WHEREVER Senator Van Nuys went during his summer visit to his home state of Indiana, he was invariably asked, "What about the poll tax?" The senator was mightily impressed, so much so that immediately on his return to Washington he convened his sub-committee and discharged the anti-poll tax bill to the full Senate Judiciary Committee. But in that body, the poll-taxers are entrenched. Not surprisingly, they defied the democratic will of the people—to which they are immune because the overwhelming majority of the population in their seven states are disenfranchised—and with the ruse of holding hearings on the legislation's constitutionality, managed to stall the measure once again.

These same senators engineered the disgraceful filibuster that prevented the abolition of the poll tax a year ago. It is now four months since the House passed the Marcantonio bill to end poll-tax restrictions. The Senate Judiciary Committee has held exhaustive constitutional hearings often before. The members know all the answers, but they take refuge behind this threadbare device to gain time.

The committee can be forced to discharge the bill immediately if the public makes its wishes heard; and cloture can be invoked to limit Senate debate if pressure from home is strong and unrelenting. Once the Senate is able to vote on the anti-poll tax bill, all the hysterics of the poll-tax bloc will not be able to prevent its passage. The real danger at present is to allow the filibusterers to postpone the showdown endlessly, and by evasion to kill the measure that will help spread democracy to the Negro and white population of the South.

## THREE MONTHS TO GO

In fact, it will be less than three months by the time you read this—only about ten weeks to New Year 1944. And that's a date we've ringed on our calendar. It represents a goalpost: you remember? 5,000 new subscribers to NM by the beginning of next year.

Will we make it? Well—during the four weeks of September, New Masses received 751 new subscriptions. It sounds like a lot, but not if you divide it by four and then remember that 5,000 goal. Less than 200 a week coming in; at that rate we would have gathered something like 3,000 new subs by next year. You don't need a rapid-calculating machine to tell you that that's two-fifths short of achieving our aim.

We ask again: will we make it? Yes; or at least, we can make it. It will take some humping, it will take all the cooperation we can get from you. But nobody can tell us that 5,000 new subscribers in four months are beyond the reach of this magazine. The truth is, the goal is pretty low when you consider the plan for reaching it. It's a simple plan: that each of our readers make an effort to obtain just one new subscriber. And if every one of you did that, we could raise the goal to dizzy heights. For the present, however, we're keeping it modest. Those 5,000 new subs will help immensely. It's urgent that we have them, and have them by the next year. Time is running shorter. If you haven't made that effort yet, won't you do it now, this week? (Please turn to back cover for Basic Method suggestion.)

## More Jim-Crow

THE wave of protest that has inundated the little Hudson town of Hillburn, New York, over the Jim-Crow school system has so far failed to engulf J. Edgar Davidson, president of the local board of educa-

tion. Disturbed over the plainly successful relations that exist between the white children in the town's modern school house and the thirty-two Negro children, whom even the local equivalent of the Mason-Dixon Line can't keep segregated, Mr. Davidson personally barricaded the school

entrance against Hillburn's other Negro children. It is interesting that Mr. Davidson now blames the protest on "outsiders." But then we imagine that Mr. Hitler blames the upsurge of the Yugoslav patriots on "outsiders" too. It is also interesting that Mr. Davidson turns out to be superintendent of

## The Philippines and Puerto Rico

IN THE capitalist democratic world, United States policy toward the Philippine Islands has shone by comparison with traditional imperialist policy. Long before the war we had promised independence to the Filipinos; we had already begun the gradual process by which the colony was to be weaned away from dependence upon American administration and economic support. As a direct consequence the defense of the Philippines, undertaken jointly by Filipino troops fighting alongside the American army, contrasted sharply with the miserable showing in Burma, the Malay Peninsula, and the Netherlands Indies. In the latter areas, the local population, hating their colonial oppressors and receiving neither the arms nor the political incentives necessary to resist, either remained passive before the Japanese advance or gave the enemy active assistance. It is true that nothing like a genuine people's war movement developed in the Philippines; nevertheless, local resistance exhibited far more vigor than in the neighboring colonies.

Congress has now before it a bill to grant the Philippines immediate independence instead of waiting until 1946 as the present law provides. The bill, backed by the administration, is sponsored in the Senate by Tydings of Maryland and in the House by Bell of Missouri. It is intended to counteract the current Japanese policy of granting "autonomy" to various conquered areas, including the Philippines. Quite clearly the Japanese are having some success. The puppet Filipino government is headed by Jose Laurel, a former Supreme Court justice; a so-called People's Mobilization Movement, designed to win mass support for Japan's policies, is under the direction of President Quezon's former secretary. Many other prominent Filipinos are known to be cooperating in the puppet regime.

Apart from the principle involved, for the United States the granting of immediate independence to the Philip-

pines has become a war necessity. Unless we take this step, we give the Japanese a free hand to seduce the Filipino people with fake independence moves. That can only make more difficult the task of driving the Japanese out of all the areas they have conquered and bringing them to unconditional surrender. No honest patriot in the Islands can fail to see that the Japanese autonomy policy is a demagogic fraud, and that in contrast the American move, interpreted in the light of our past performance in the Philippines and in connection with the declaration of the Atlantic Charter, must be accepted as genuine. The Tydings-Bell bill, if enacted, will prepare the way for the renewal of coalition warfare against the Japanese invader by the Filipinos and Americans as soon as the time comes for definitive action in that theater of war.

THE policy now being recommended for the other American colony, Puerto Rico, is in sorry contrast to our plans for the Philippines. Is it only under severe military necessity that we are willing to carry out our Atlantic Charter pledge to subject peoples? Judging from the limited nature of the reforms proposed for Puerto Rico in Governor Tugwell's recently published report and in the President's recommendations for changes in the organic law it would seem that we are still unwilling to face some of the political implications of the war for the extermination of fascism.

Tugwell's report made the startling admission that Puerto Rico is no better off today than it was in 1898 when we seized it from Spain. He struck hard against absentee ownership and other flagrant abuses. But curiously enough his solution is to continue American political suzerainty for years to come, during which time he advocates an increase in democratic liberties and an improvement in the Puerto Rican economy under our guidance. The general line

of these recommendations has been buttressed by the President's recommendations to Congress for granting Puerto Rico a greater degree of home rule, including the election of the governor. Without question these recommendations deserve support, but a support based upon the realization that they are only a partial answer to the demand for independence at the earliest opportunity consistent with the war effort. The views of the overwhelming mass of Puerto Ricans have been expressed on three significant occasions during recent months. Last February the Island Legislature unanimously passed a resolution demanding the end of the colonial system and asking for the right of self-determination. This position was endorsed, again unanimously, by the June convention of the Puerto Rican Confederation of Workers. In August the Pro-Independence Congress, composed of 8,500 delegates elected from all parts of the Island and representing all political parties, agreed that only full and immediate political independence would make it possible to solve the pressing economic problems of the Island.

IT is true that Puerto Rico is no longer centrally located in the military strategy of the United Nations. But failure to grant it freedom at the same time that independence is extended to the Philippines is tantamount to saying: "We will apply the Atlantic Charter only when we have to offset the moves of our enemies and to ensure our military success. In other cases we'll string things along with a mild program of reform which will assure the continuation of the basic colonial relationship." Such an attitude represents neither the democratic aspirations of the people of the world nor the political necessities of the war against fascism. Our present program for Puerto Rico must be rapidly and vastly extended until it meets fully the urgent principle of self-determination.

the Ramapo Ajax plant upon which the Negro people used to be wholly dependent. He apparently cannot stomach the new freedom which improved employment opportunities have brought to the community.

The State authorities have been woefully slow to act in this case. While the townspeople and their children suffer and while Mr. Davidson and his crew continue to comfort the Axis by defying the law, the plea for help seems to be gathering dust in somebody's Albany desk. Judge John A. McKenna of the Rockland County Children's Court has warned the parents of the Jim-Crowed children that they must either send their youngsters to an accredited school immediately or pay a ten dollar fine each. Accordingly, the day following this court order the children and parents showed up at Hillburn's modern school house and demanded admission. This is when Mr. Davidson in person stood in the doorway, refused them entrance and made his little speech about "outsiders."

Meanwhile only four Negro children are attending the firetrap Jim-Crow school, while fifty-two are attending an improvised school in the local chapel, which at least won't collapse on the children's heads. How-

ever, the temporary school isn't accredited and so doesn't meet the requirements laid down by the Children's Court. Nothing short of the backing down of the Davidson-led school board is going to settle the issue. So far there is no evidence that they will back down voluntarily. They, and evidently the state authorities, will have to be pushed and evidently so will the state authorities.

### Kurt Rosenfeld

**I**N THE death of Kurt Rosenfeld the anti-fascist world has lost a distinguished fighter. For almost forty years his name was associated in Germany with everything that stood for human dignity and freedom. As a lawyer he lent his great talents to the German trade union movement. And when he was elected to the Reichstag he continued a never ending struggle against the war mongers who brought Germany to disaster in 1914. As Minister of Justice in Prussia he tried to democratize the judicial apparatus, but his efforts aroused such hatred on the part of reactionaries that he was ousted from his post. Like the fate that befell thousands of others who opposed Hitler, Rosenfeld was forced to leave Ger-

many in 1933. He went to Prague, then to Paris, and in 1934 arrived in this country.

From the first day of his exile Kurt Rosenfeld tried to organize the anti-Nazi forces into an unbreakable coalition. Not for a moment did he share the illusion that Hitler's Reich would be a pushover. And equally certain was his belief that Hitlerism meant war and that it could be defeated only by the united action of the democratic powers. He was especially interested in uniting all anti-fascist Americans of German descent. The German-American Emergency Conference and the monthly paper, *German-American*, are in a sense his children. There was hardly a project which this organization undertook that did not have his advice and help. During his last days his thoughts were concentrated on the significance of the Free German Committees in Moscow and London. He saw in them invaluable aids in political warfare and the reestablishment of an unfettered Germany. To his funeral came even those among his countrymen who had differed with him politically. It was a demonstration of the deep respect which thousands of refugees had for him and symbolic of the unity for which he fought.



## WATCH ON THE POTOMAC by BRUCE MINTON

# FIDDLING ON CAPITOL HILL

Washington.

**W**ITH the Red Army battering the Dnieper line and driving through the Smolensk "gateway to the West," one would expect this war capital to be exultant over the prospect of approaching victory. But official Washington has remained discouragingly calm, either blind to the chance of striking the final blow or just not interested. What impressed me throughout this past week has been the casual attitude toward the war, the seeming lack of realization of the facts of life.

A few items from Washington during this fateful week:

(1) In Congress there has been no serious mention of the need for a second front.

(2) In the Senate, Sheridan Downey of California talked hours of the most abject nonsense in support of the Wheeler bill to delay the draft of pre-Pearl Harbor fathers. He showed no comprehension of the role he was playing, and he gave the impression of a man who has been sold a bill of goods. His rantings about how this war can be won without a land army and merely by dropping bombs on the Axis became so ludicrous that even those senators who are most

anxious for any diversion to impede prosecution of the war grew restive. It is worth noting that Downey's argument logically trapped him into mouthing racist theories indistinguishable from those espoused by the Nazis; before he quite knew what he was saying, he indulged in anti-union remarks worthy of Pegler. His "analysis" of the military situation set a new low in fantasy by ignoring events on the Eastern Front.

(3) Three of the five Senators who flew 43,000 miles to visit American war fronts held a press conference. Two central ideas emerged from this joint report of Senators Mead of New York, Russell of Georgia, and Brewster of Maine. In the first place, the Senators seemed to think that the American armed forces are bearing almost the entire brunt of the war, while their efforts go unappreciated even at home. And in the second place, the Senators took great pains to warn against British wiles.

The Senators predicted a long war. They seemed to consider the Pacific front the main theater of battle at the present time. They were oblivious to the need for a second front in Europe. Their view of the

war did not take into account the Eastern Front. Senator Mead stressed that it is high time for the United States to look to its petroleum reserves and to demand greater supplies from British wells in Iran and Iraq. He and Senator Brewster gave the impression that the United States is being victimized by the British and getting little in return. The US is building airfields in foreign countries in which we will have no rights six months after the war is over unless we use lend-lease persuasion to get these rights at once. Again, the Senators intimated that the British benefited at our expense.

(4) In the House, Congressman Shafer of Michigan blew his top over the rumored transfer of General Marshall to an "inferior position," which he attributed to British pressure. The Hearst-McCormick-Patterson press inflated this rumor, accusing the President of dirty politics, in an attempt to give credence to the existence of a rift between the Chief of Staff and the Commander-in-Chief. The President, at his Tuesday press conference, angrily denounced this eagerness to be of service to

the Axis, and made very clear that the whole whispering campaign was so much hot air.

(5) The Fulbright resolution, after passing the House, ran into a snag in the Senate Committee, and only the President's intervention succeeded in prodding the Senators into agreeing to consider some sort of resolution in favor of postwar international cooperation.

(6) General Douglas MacArthur's recent remarks about the conduct of the war in the Pacific were seized upon by the appeasers and their press to revile the President and his war leadership. Senator Brewster, at the press conference mentioned above, did not help much. He gave the impression that General MacArthur enlisted the support of Prime Minister John Curtin of Australia against the Allied high command, and that a serious rivalry exists between MacArthur and Lord Mountbatten. The McCormick-Patterson press again made charges that the British had taken us into camp.

(7) Admiral Standley, ambassador to the USSR, returned to Washington, reported to the President and Secretary Hull, and later talked off the record to the press—Kingsbury Smith, of the International News Service (Hearst) who enjoys the closest connections in the State Department, was present. Immediately thereafter, Kingsbury Smith wrote a story pointing out that Washington and London are disturbed by the rapid advances of the Red Army. He expressed much the same concern as that shown in stories from London over the possibility that the Red Army may deal a death blow to the Nazis before the western powers can launch a second front.

ON THE basis of the above items, it is possible to draw a tentative judgment of the temper of Washington in the week Smolensk fell. But first it is necessary to note the rash of bragging that has broken out over the job our armed forces are doing. True, wherever American soldiers and sailors have seen action they have given an account of themselves that deserves the highest praise. But the sort of boasting heard in Congress is disproportionate to the relatively small burden of fighting yet borne by our forces. The verbal swaggering seems to me symptomatic of the general uneasiness over our failure to come to grips with the enemy. The temptation is to over-estimate what we have done in order to excuse the continued absence of a second front.

The Soviet Union is almost completely omitted from the estimates of the war made by various public figures, even during this week of world-shaking victories. Like the swagger that covers up the failure to launch a decisive offensive in western Europe, the reluctance to mention Red Army successes

is an attempt to diminish the importance and implications of Soviet advances. The old ostrich game.

The absence of coalition warfare has given comfort to the Japan Firsters. The three junketing Senators stressed the fight in the Pacific, intimating that Japan is the main enemy. The reasoning behind this misrepresentation undoubtedly is tied up with the fact that the Pacific war is considered an "American show." The Senators evidently thought that this emphasis was expected of them. This attitude is harmful to an understanding of the coalition war to which we are committed and which alone spells victory.

The rising anti-British sentiment expressed by (among others) the three traveling Senators, by Downey, and even by Senator Connally, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, is being heard just after Prime Minister Churchill offered an Anglo-American alliance as a substitute for an Anglo-Soviet-American coalition. This dangerous manifestation confirms Earl Browder's warning that failure to wage coalition war not only imperils relations with the Soviet Union but also undermines Anglo-American collaboration. Churchill's proposed alliance has been given some lip-service in Washington, but simultaneously

the contradictions between British and American interests on a world scale suddenly come to the fore and give rise to an ugly bitterness directed against the British. There is nothing healthy in this anti-British outburst.

CHURCHILL'S speech to Parliament confirms Washington opinion that President Roosevelt and General Marshall went to Quebec determined to obtain an immediate second front, but were stymied by the British. The reasons for American failure to overcome Churchill's opposition are complex, but in substance they boil down to the fact that the President lacked sufficient backing at home to enable him to press his demands in the face of British objections. The President had to take into account the fact that the State Department also opposed the second front. Still ridden by a pathological fear of the Soviet Union, the Department is unprepared for a quick end to the European war. It lacks any contact with the underground people's movements in occupied Europe; it is busily maneuvering its own groups which have no popular support in the countries they presume to represent; it is afraid of the democratic upsurge that victory will bring. For all these reasons, the State Department is inclined

## Underground

UNDERGROUND warfare in Slovakia has taken a sharp turn upward during the last few weeks. The power station at Handlova in central Slovakia was destroyed by bombs and by fire. All the large factories in this area depend on electric power from that station and its destruction stopped the production of pulp, paper and textiles for the Nazi army. A few days after the underground sabotage of the Handlova power station the power station at Trnava in western Slovakia was destroyed, wrecking production in about twenty mills. And at Krupina and Zlitate Moravce huge stores of flour and the flour mills were burned after an attack by small bands of what the Bratislava quisling radio described as "robbers, bolsheviks, Jews and Anglo-American agents."

There were more field fires this past summer than in the whole period since 1939, and the harvest is officially estimated as being twenty percent lower than last year. Industrial production has also diminished. The Nazi paper of Bratislava, *Der Grenzboten*, complained that the "laziness of the Slovak workers slowed down essential war work to thirty percent of

its former productivity."

The mine district of Banska Stiavnica is seething with unrest. In April and May electric wire poles were cut four times and the mines remained without electric power for a day and a half each time. In July, huge storehouses at Zvolen which the Nazis had built for food and textile products were twice set afire. The official quisling paper *Gardista* listed 5,000 cases of sabotage brought before special tribunals in May, June, and July. The concentration camps at Illava and Leopoldov are filled beyond capacity.

New recruits for the Slovak army have been isolated from the older soldiers, especially from those returning from the Eastern Front. The underground Slovak radio station and the underground press have revealed that in a secret decree Slovak General Catlos called the number of desertions "appalling." The same general is also reported by the underground press to have said: "I have fifty-seven lieutenant colonels and colonels but I am not able to get one of them to volunteer for front line duty."



to favor a long war.

Moreover, several of the President's advisors, like Harry Hopkins, who is profoundly influenced by Churchill, underestimated the Red Army, whose recent advances took them by surprise. These advisors confidently expected the Nazis to keep the Red Army busy throughout this summer, and only by next spring did they expect to see the Red Army creeping toward Smolensk and the Dnieper. Then Anglo-American armies could step in and win the war.

The defeatist press, the America First spokesmen, and all those anxious to obstruct the war have done their utmost to persuade

the American people that the timing of the second front was not their concern; these cliques have thereby partially robbed the President of much needed support for his offensive strategy. The unions have failed to back the President with sufficient strength on this question, though recently organized labor has begun to correct itself.

But the best laid plans of those who insisted on a waiting game have gone awry. Dispatches from London and hints in Washington express a panicky concern over the Red Army's strength. Talk is heard of a second front "before the Reds do the job alone"—essentially an anti-Soviet attitude which has nothing to do with coalition war-

fare for the destruction of the mutual enemy. Such a conception of the second front would reduce the offensive to a maneuver taken or withheld for the purpose of driving piddling bargains. This approach can be disastrous even for those who think in terms of nineteenth century imperialism.

General Marshall has expressed his desire to strike now to avoid a protracted war. The President is thinking in terms of the offensive. But the big push for the second front must come from outside Washington, loud enough and strong enough to be heard even above the din raised by the Wheelers and the Shafers in the halls of Congress.



## LABOR ABROAD by MARTIN T. BROWN

# DUEL BELOW THE RIO GRANDE

LATIN AMERICAN labor raises one of the strongest voices for a second front. Four years of war have played havoc with Latin American economy. Standards of living are even lower than the incredibly low levels of peacetime. Food supplies and commerce in general have been reduced by submarine activity in the Pacific and Atlantic in addition to the fact that all available shipping has been converted war use. A protracted conflict means disaster for the Latin American community.

So threatening is the economic crisis that Vicente Lombardo Toledano, head of the Confederation of Latin American Workers (CTAL), recently told Allied Labor News that a western invasion of Europe is imperative "not because Moscow demands it, but because a drawn out war means starvation for our peoples." Simultaneously he warned against "efforts of the reactionaries to see the USSR bleed to death in order to dictate a minority peace," going on to say, "But the world's future cannot be placed in the hands of this minority. This war is a war of peoples, not for the interests of one small social group."

Latin American labor has, of course, earned the right to speak its mind on this most critical of all international issues. Not only have CTAL affiliates campaigned for the establishment of volunteer armies to fight alongside United Nations forces, but they also have championed the severance of all relations with the enemy powers. No groups have done as much as they have against Franco's falangist operatives in the countries below the Rio Grande. Despite the most serious food shortages at home, Latin American labor has sent food to the Allies as well as other war materials.

In addition to Latin America's strong

attachments to the United Nations it has displayed special interest in the fighting on the Eastern Front and in the Soviet Union. In Chile, for example, recognition of the USSR followed repeated requests by the Confederation of Chilean Workers that the government establish close ties with Moscow. As a matter of fact, the first public announcement by President Rios of Chile's plan to exchange diplomatic representatives with Russia was made to a labor delegation. And it is hardly a surprise that Latin American labor has been in the forefront in the drive to expand the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee to include labor organizations throughout the world.

BEHIND the suppression last July of the Argentine Confederation of Labor (CGT) by the fascist Ramirez government is one of the most sordid tales in labor history. Numbering more than 400,000 members before the Ramirez coup of June fourth, the CGT was the third largest among CTAL affiliates. Its general secretary until early this year was Jose Domenech, an ardent supporter of former President Ramon Castillo's "neutrality" policy. Domenech was removed as CGT secretary by its central committee in March, 1943, and replaced by Socialist parliamentary deputy Francisco Perez Leiros, an advocate of Argentine cooperation with the United Nations and a CTAL vice-president. Leiros was elected despite the expulsion of a number of CGT central committee members by Domenech, who earlier had joined the Socialist Party in an attempt to maintain control of the CGT.

On the labor front Domenech repre-

sented "neutrality" in the form of *apoliticismo*—complete pre-occupation with union affairs. Not only did he oppose the unity movement, but he also expelled many members of his own union, the National Union of Railwaymen, who had helped form local victory committees.

Leiros was never able to take over the administrative machinery of the CGT, however, since Castillo's police, supporting Domenech, prevented his functioning as general secretary. After his repudiation by Argentine labor, Domenech continued to claim CGT leadership and retained control of the CGT offices and its newspaper. Using the same epithets of "Communist" toward Leiros and other CGT leaders as Luigi Antonini has used against leaders of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Domenech strengthened his ties with the leaders of the Socialist and Labor (Second) International.

Domenech has been functioning as the head of a state-supported trade union movement since the CGT was abolished by Ramirez. Some of the recent issues of his newspaper reveal his complete support of Argentine fascism. In the July 11 issue, for example, we read that Argentinians should "not turn a deaf ear to the realization of the constructive perspectives proclaimed by the provisional government through President Pedro P. Ramirez." A good part of this and other issues is devoted to Red-baiting charges against Perez Leiros. At one point the paper carries a reprint from New York's Social Democratic *New Leader*—on the "infamies" of the Soviet government. And every issue of the paper since Ramirez' putsch supports the fascist government, ignores discussion of the war and devotes much space to articles

by Schevenels and other Second International leaders. It will be remembered that back in 1927, when Mussolini proclaimed his Labor Charter—which abolished free trade unions in Italy—it was such Social Democratic trade union officials as Domenech who either went over to the fascist unions or proclaimed, from safety in Paris, the hopelessness of continuing the fight against fascism.

ONE of the most significant Pan-American developments in recent years appears in the news that an agreement providing for a price increase in Bolivian tin will shortly be concluded between the US Metals Reserve Corporation and Bolivian tin producers. The proposed agreement stipulates that this price increase is to be used for improving the working conditions of Bolivia's tin miners, culminating a campaign waged in the US by the CIO's Latin American Affairs Committee and by Latin American labor organizations for more than half a year. Reports from Bolivia say that the only thing holding up final ratification is agreement on the amount of increase.

Shortly after the Catavi tin workers' strike in December, 1942, a US commission, headed by Judge Calvert Magruder and including Robert Watt and Martin C. Kyne of the AFL and CIO respectively, visited Bolivia at the request of President Enrique Penaranda's government. Following an exhaustive study of working and living conditions, the commission reported that the only way to increase tin production—Bolivia supplies half the American and British tin needs—was to raise the incredibly low living standards. In a supplementary report, Kyne listed the provocations that caused the strike and recounted the story of the massacre of hundreds of workers at Catavi.

When he heard about the formation of the American commission, Simon Patino, one of Bolivia's tin magnates, instructed his La Paz manager to use all the influence he could to prevent the commission from coming to Bolivia. He urged his manager to get Foreign Minister Manuel Tomas Elio, who is also Patino's adviser, to act against "intervention" by the United States and remove the secretary of Bolivia's embassy

in Washington, Dorado, because of his sponsorship of the commission. It is significant in this connection that Patino has visited Bolivia very infrequently in the last twenty-five years, and has spent his time rather in touring Europe's bright spots in some sort of diplomatic capacity. He is now living in New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel. As for a price increase in tin, he indicated his willingness to accept one for himself and the other tin magnates—Hochschild and Aramayo—but objected to the Board of Economic Warfare, at that time conducting the contract negotiations with Bolivian productions, including provisions improving workers' conditions as "jeopardizing Bolivia's independence."

WHEN the agreement is finally concluded, it promises to be one of the most effective aids the United States has given to the Latin American people. If carried out along similar lines throughout the Americas, it will be one of the best weapons with which to undermine the Falange, whose main appeal at present is based on attacking the United States.



## FRONT LINES

by COLONEL T.

# 30 LONG. E-55 LAT. N

THESE are the bearings of the hub of the second world war. This is where a decision is slowly ripening. The point in question is almost in the Smolensk Gate, that corridor between the upper reaches of the Dvina and the Dnieper. The 30th meridian (east) is what we might call the "beam" of the German front in the east. It is approximately the Leningrad-Odessa line. The great transversal railroad between the two "flank" cities follows that line almost religiously from Leningrad to Zhlobin. From here on it splits into two branches—one via Bakhmach (now in Soviet hands), and the other via Kazatin and Zhmerinka, with Kiev lying on a shuttle line (Kazatin-Bakhmach). The Leningrad-Odessa geographical line is 800 miles long, with Zhlobin in the exact center.

The northern sector (250 miles) is protected by the system of rivers and marshes centering around Lake Ilmen. Then follows the Smolensk Gate (50 miles) with no natural obstacles. After that, 250 miles of the Dnieper line with the Pripet marshes in the rear of the southern half of this sector. Finally, another 250 miles (Kiev-Odessa) almost totally unprotected by nature.

This "beam" is abutted at its ends against the sea flanks of the front (we disregard the inactive, although very long Karelo-Finnish sector of the front which adds another 700 miles to it, but is entirely dependent on what happens in the Leningrad-Odessa sector and cannot be in any way decisive any more, thanks mostly to the preventive expedition by the Red Army in 1939-40) on the Gulf of Finland and on the Black Sea.

At Orsha the "beam" is crossed at an angle by the strategic "axis," or "keel" of the German front, i.e. by the Warsaw-Moscow line. The Smolensk gate (to be exact—its western exit, or the Vitebsk-Orsha line) is 260 miles from Moscow and 350 miles from the Soviet border on the Bug, northwest of Brest-Litovsk.

More than two years ago (July 1941) the Germans concentrated their blitz forces and sent them crashing along the "keel." They reached and crossed the "beam," after twenty-five months of unbelievable efforts and sacrifices.

Their center is dead on the "beam" (Kiev-Nevel). To the north and south they have two flanking bulges. The northern bulge is fifty miles deep and 200 miles at

the base. The southern bulge is almost 200 miles deep and 250 miles at the base. The front today is roughly 1,100 miles long. It was 1,250 miles long two years ago; 1,800 miles a year ago; and 1,200 miles in mid-July of this year.

THUS we see that the German summer retreat to a depth of ninety miles along the Smolensk direction, 120 miles along the Kirov direction, 235 miles along the Orel (Novosil) direction, 250 miles along the Belgorod direction and 160 miles along the Voroshilovsk direction, yielded them a shortening of the front of not more than 100 miles, or eight percent (this may have saved them a maximum of twenty divisions).

This retreat, however, forced them smack against a 200-mile sector of their "beam" which here is (or will be very soon) under the guns of the Soviet artillery (the Nevel-Zhlobin sector). The sector between Zhlobin and Kiev has its back against the terrible Pripet marshes where one further step back will split the German front in two. The bulges in the north and south are dangerous traps and their fate hangs on the ability of the Wehrmacht to

hold the Smolensk gate and the Melitopol gate, both of which have practically no natural defenses.

Thus we see that the line now being frantically held by the Germans does not present many strategic advantages, but is pregnant with obvious strategic dangers.

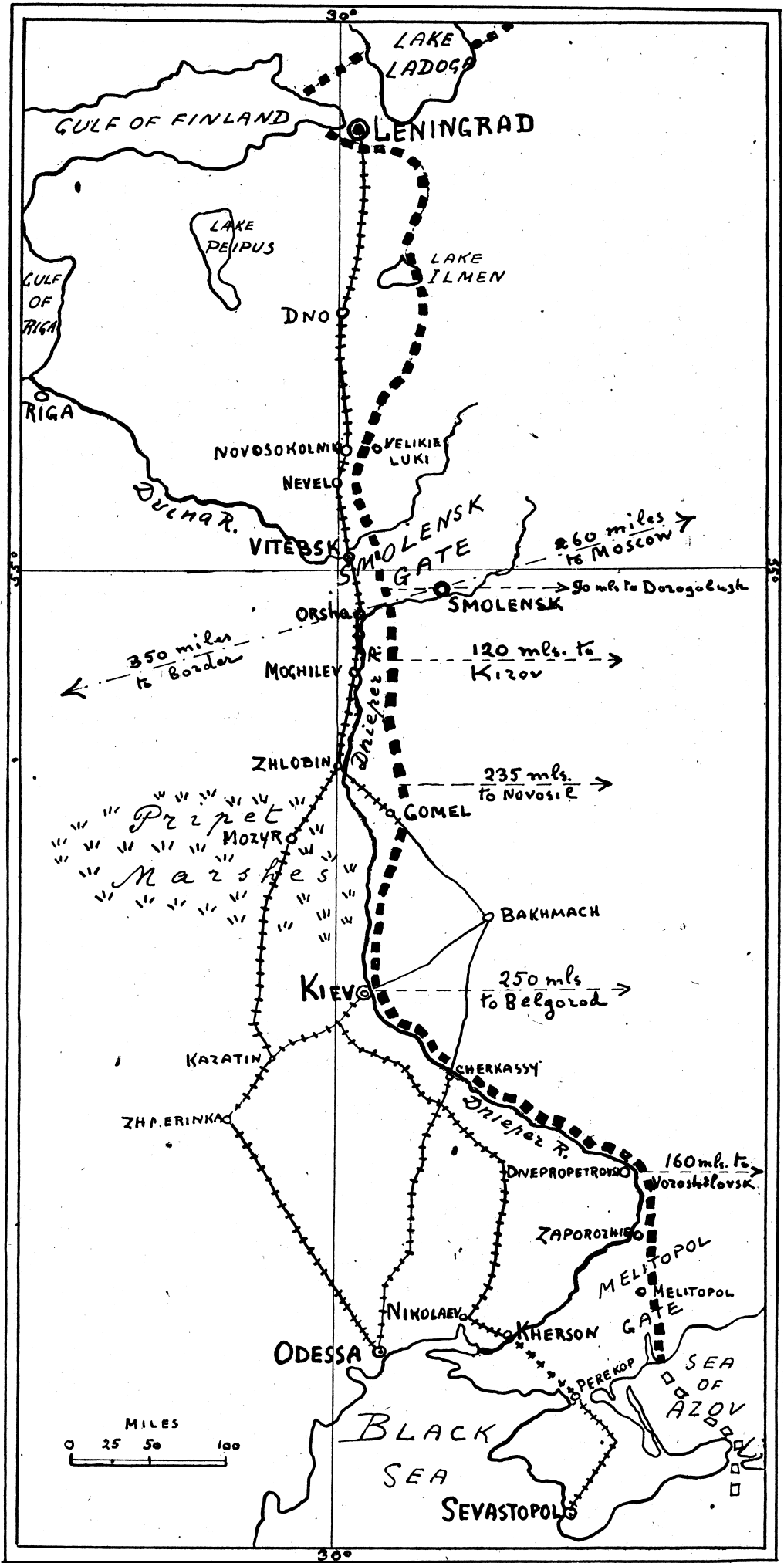
Now, just one more observation: practically all the strategic objectives of the German High Command lie east of the front line, i.e. in their retreat the Germans have lost not only an offensive position (the Donetz, Belgorod, and Orel bulges), but they have lost oil, coal, iron and a lot of wheat.

Can anybody honestly and seriously say that the Germans have withdrawn to this line of their own volition? Of course such a statement would be utterly ridiculous. A move of this sort could have been made only as a result of a sound military defeat. This is precisely what happened to the Wehrmacht.

The popular tune among the military "experts" today is that "the Germans are retreating." That, of course, is quite true. The "experts" also say that the Germans are retreating voluntarily with small losses. This, of course, is not true. The fact that the Red Army is advancing means at the same time that the Germans are retreating. No use wasting words on this. But *where* and *how* are the Germans retreating? They are retreating (or have retreated) to a line which leaves much to be desired from their point of view. They are retreating after having abandoned virtually everything they came for. They are retreating with very heavy losses. All this gives a measure of their defeat.

As to German losses, it should be noted that German prisoners now number about ten percent of the number killed. Booty captured is very considerable. The Red Army advances in a series of outflanking movements, or pincers which bite off small, but numerous chunks out of the Wehrmacht. This is not one big "Stalingrad," but hundreds of little "Stalingrads," which all add up to a tidy total of German losses.

An editorial in the *New York Times* the other day said something about the Red Army having reached the Dnieper and about our being able from now on to judge "what it can do." Well, this is typical *Times* brass which has nothing to do with the military situation. The Red Army has already shown "what it can do" many times. But it has now reached the Dnieper precisely under the conditions of which we have been apprehensive for several weeks: (a) no second front in western Europe, and (b) the setting in of the autumn rains. Because of that the Wehrmacht may yet get another reprieve, thanks to the timidity of Allied military thought, and action.



# WHAT ABOUT ROOSEVELT?

*Misconceptions of certain liberals and the dangers they lead to. A. B. Magil discusses FDR's role in relation to the war.*

A LIBERAL friend said to me recently: "I'm fed up with Roosevelt. I'm convinced that he isn't, never was, never will be a real liberal." I was strongly tempted to say: "Thank God," but decided that under the circumstances it would hardly be the most persuasive reply. My friend was reflecting a mood that is fairly widespread among certain groups of middle class liberals, particularly since the Wallace-Jones affair. Judging by the polls, this mood has not seriously affected the people as a whole. And the growing number of fourth-term endorsements within the CIO indicates a trend in the labor movement that is unmistakable. Yet there is no doubt that among those who have come to regard themselves as the votaries of the New Deal, the special custodians of all its works, disaffection is rising. From these quarters come statements that the President is steadily moving to the right, that he is appeasing the reactionaries, that he is betraying his principles, that the New Deal is dead—all of which is often accompanied by speculations concerning the desirability of supporting Roosevelt in 1944. Let me cite two recent examples:

"The New Dealers who are not trying to apologize for the President," wrote T.R.B., the *New Republic's* Washington columnist, in the August 23 issue of that magazine, "are asking themselves and everyone they meet whether Mr. Roosevelt again will become the champion of progressive government once the war is won. Needless to say, there are no very clear answers." The trouble is, T.R.B. continued, that early in the war Roosevelt "purposefully struck a bargain with American business," and though from time to time many Washington correspondents, including T.R.B., were "fooled into writing" that "the President was prepared to reassert his faith in the New Deal," they were wrong. And he concluded: "It must be reported that the stock of Henry A. Wallace and also of Wendell Willkie has risen as the result of recent White House activities."

One of the ablest Washington correspondents, I. F. Stone of the *Nation* and *PM*, has been even more caustic. In the July 24 issue of the *Nation*, following FDR's action in the Wallace-Jones controversy, he wrote one of the bitterest attacks on the President that has appeared in the liberal press. Its concluding words challenged what had been the prevailing liberal attitude toward Roosevelt. "The man who created the New Deal seems intent on destroying it before he leaves office in his flaccid retreat before the bourbons

of his own party. Isn't it time for labor and the left to look around for new leadership? Newer men, notably Wallace and Willkie, are providing a courageous idealism that contrasts more and more hopefully with the appeasement policies Roosevelt is steadily pursuing in both domestic and foreign policy."

THESE two writers are more or less representative of a wider circle. No one can deny that certain phases of the administration's foreign and domestic policy deserve sharp criticism. And it is also true that whoever happens to be President and Commander-in-Chief must ultimately bear a large measure of responsibility for everything that goes wrong. But that is the most general and most unilluminating aspect of the question. If we are to come to grips with the problem, we cannot view the President or any single individual as *deus ex machina*, the source of all good and evil, but must see his role amid the interplay of forces that shape our country's social and political destiny. And if we are to tackle constructively the weaknesses and deficiencies that exist, we must view them in balance and perspective. It seems to me that the basic approach of these liberal critics of the President is out of focus and leads inevitably to errors of historic vision.

First, it should be noted that the target of this criticism is not the President's conduct of the war, but the alleged social consequences of his acts and policies. These liberal critics generally treat the war itself as an extraneous matter to be intellectually by-passed for the more congenial pastures of the postwar world. Rarely do they bother with such issues as the delay in opening a second front or the failure of the United States and Britain to develop even an approximation of full coalition warfare with the Soviet Union. Besides postwar questions, their preoccupation is with those developments on the home front or in foreign policy which they feel give ascendancy to the special interests of big business. And if intellectually they live in the future, emotionally they live in the past, in the aura of the great crusade against the Liberty League. In the minds of these critics there is thus a definite dichotomy between the war on the one hand and progressive social objectives on the other, a dichotomy that often assumes the form of actual conflict. In fact, the complaint often is that the needs of the war are devouring the liberal principles of the New Deal.

This liberal criticism of the President betrays a root misconception as to the nature

of the war and the dynamic of its development. There are times when the readers of *PM* must be uncertain whether their main enemy is Hitler or Standard Oil. But this is not primarily a war of the poor versus the rich, the people versus the trusts, the progressives versus the conservatives, the New Dealers versus the anti-New Dealers. It is nakedly a war for the survival of the American nation and of all the nations attacked or threatened by the fascist Axis. That is the common denominator which unites a socialist country with capitalist countries. That is also the common denominator which unites capitalists, workers, and all other social strata within the capitalist members of the United Nations. It may sound terribly "radical" to denounce monopoly in general and Wall Street in general, but I think President Roosevelt is being more truly progressive and shows a much firmer grasp of the essential character of this war than his liberal critics when he conducts it not in accordance with the reality expressed in his monopoly message of 1938, but with the changed reality of 1941-43. The dominant forces of American big business are today not abetting fascism but—for their own reasons of course and in their own way—fighting it. Those who refuse to recognize this and what it implies are playing with fool's-gold radicalism that can only benefit the most dangerous monopolists of all, those who are the real rulers of Nazi Germany.

THE decisive political cleavage in American life today is not right and left, but pro-war and anti-war. And business-as-usualism, because it obstructs the war, tends to merge with the latter. All this, however, does not mean that the purpose of this gigantic struggle for survival is restoration of the status quo ante. For it is in the nature of the present world crisis that there can be no survival without liberation. One of the towering facts about the war is that it is accomplishing the most basic social reform of our time, the destruction of fascism. And it is nonsense to imagine that when that is done, Europe, or Asia, or Africa, or America can ever be the same. Let it be remembered, too, that social change is not only the effect of victory, but a contributing cause. Certain liberals would test the war by the extent to which it advances what they consider the social program of the New Deal. The procedure ought to be reversed. All social measures must be tested by the extent to which they help or hinder the war. The repeal of the poll tax is not simply a reform, but, above all, a weapon in the war. The Smith-Connally

act, on the other hand, is not simply reactionary, but, above all, an impediment to the prosecution of the war. And the same test must be applied to foreign policy as well. Those liberals who tended to accept the specious argument that Darlanism was militarily justified, but insisted that it was politically and morally reprehensible, cut the ground from under their own feet. No policy toward France which alienates the French people, which creates confusion and suspicion among the other conquered nations and among our principal allies can be anything but a military liability.

Because the liberal critics of the President fail to view his leadership in the context of the war and with victory as the primary touchstone, they inevitably exaggerate the meaning of certain acts. The political landscape becomes for them all trees and no forest. Ironically, directly following Stone's attack on the President there appeared in the same issue of the *Nation* another article by Frederick L. Schuman which began: "All champions of the Four Freedoms and all defenders of constitutional government will rejoice at President Roosevelt's public rebuke to Congress in his press conference of July 13 for its efforts to purge three distinguished liberals from the federal service." The rebuke should also apply to those who speak lightmindedly of the President betraying or destroying the New Deal and manage somehow to overlook his message to Congress repudiating its dismissal of Messrs. Lovett, Dodd, and Watson, his vigorous vetoes of the Smith-Connally anti-labor bill and the congressional attempt to ban subsidies, his reorganization and strengthening of the Fair Employment Practices Committee—all during the period when he was supposed to be "swinging to the right."

THE present liberal "disillusionment" with Roosevelt is, of course, nothing new. Instability and a tendency to leap from one extreme to the other have always characterized the attitude of many liberals toward the President. At the inception of the New Deal they hailed it as a "revolution" and little short of socialism. And those who today find a monopolist plot in every executive order were unable to perceive in 1933 that the broad blanket of NRA, designed and executed by the lords of finance and industry, completely covered the frail form of New Deal liberalism, with room to spare. After the rapturous summer came for these liberals the inevitable winter of doubt and grief—just about the time the New Deal was beginning to break loose from the embrace of big business—and the equally inevitable and extravagant reconciliation in the second-term campaign of 1936. And of course many of those who now speak bitterly of FDR's "swing to the right" were either silent or cheering from the grandstand dur-

ing the period prior to June 22, 1941, when the administration's anti-Soviet course seriously endangered American security and threatened so many progressive achievements.

NOR is the consistency even in the present liberal criticism of the President. One month after T.R.B. expressed doubt as to whether Roosevelt would ever again be "the champion of progressive government" we find him writing (*New Republic*, September 20): "Most of the liberals whom I know remember, or will remember before November of next year, that after all, Mr. Roosevelt is the ablest politician in the country; that he has done more for social reform than any President since Lincoln; that he is perfectly capable, once the war is over, of turning again to the New Deal and in a couple of weeks' time of wiping out the memory of the war period with a series of slashing proposals. . . ." And forgotten are the baleful innuendoes about chucking Roosevelt for Wallace or Willkie: "There are a good many liberals, here in Washington, who feel that if Mr. Roosevelt is good enough for Henry Wallace, he is still good enough for them." Nor is I. F. Stone as intransigent as he seems. He tells us in *PM* of September 3: "Some days I'm so mad at Mr. Roosevelt I would cheerfully trade him in for a second-hand Ohio Republican. Other days I wonder. This is one of the other days." Here is a veritable cult of irresponsibility. Thousands of Americans are supposed to be guided on questions that vitally affect their future and the future of mankind on the basis of how I. F. Stone happens to feel when he wakes up in the morning!

This attitude, which is not peculiar to Stone (in some respects, notably in his advocacy of American-Soviet collaboration, he is, in fact, better than most), is the worm at the core of so much liberal thought. We live in deeply responsible times, but many of the professed spokesmen for American liberalism do not feel on them

the weight of these times, do not carry the tragedy and the grandeur of the anti-fascist war in the marrow of their living and thinking. They are governed by caprice, are steeped in the political bohemianism that stultifies much that is good in *PM*, and too often blindly rise to the bait of anti-Communism. It is not Roosevelt who has failed these liberals. It is they who have failed Roosevelt, failed in this supreme crisis their own country.

WHAT, after all, has been the role of Franklin D. Roosevelt? Roosevelt is not the president of a socialist republic, nor is he a labor president, and it is silly to expect him to behave as if he were. He is, on the contrary, the political head of the most powerful capitalist country in the world, directing the destiny of his nation in the epoch of advanced imperialism, with monopoly capital firmly at the economic controls. He came to power, moreover, as a crisis president, when millions of the unemployed were clamoring for bread, while many of those who later formed the hate-Roosevelt chorus were clamoring for a dictator. From its inception the Roosevelt administration was a coalition of heterogeneous forces pulling in different directions. And Roosevelt was the link that held together in unstable alliance southern poll-taxers and northern Negroes, trade unionists, unemployed workers, farmers, professionals, small businessmen, capitalists, and local political machines whose moral habits were not over-fastidious. Pressures which in other countries would be directed through a variety of political parties were in this country funneled through the administration and through the President. Roosevelt believed it possible to achieve an equilibrium among these disparate forces, but the irrepressible class conflict upset his calculations, drove most of the big capitalists into truculent opposition and simultaneously impelled the President to align himself with the majority of the people, among whom the role of the organized



Franklin D. Roosevelt

workers came increasingly to the fore.

It was only the coming of the war that for the first time made possible a relatively stable equilibrium and alliance of classes and the subordination of all conflicts to the central objective of victory. In view of the broad national character of the war not only is there no reason to criticize the participation of leading industrialists in the government's war agencies, but such participation is indispensable for assuring the maximum contribution from the capitalist class whose controlling groups support the anti-Axis struggle. This does not mean toleration of business-as-usualism and even less does it mean concessions to the National Association of Manufacturers clique that is infected with defeatism. Moreover, there is ground for legitimate criticism in the fact that similar participation has not been accorded labor, thereby weakening the war effort.

**O**BVIOUSLY, in order to preserve and strengthen national unity the President must, far more than in the past, consider the wishes of the various classes and adjust them to the requirements of the war. Naturally the kind of adjustments and compromises that Roosevelt makes are not the same as those that Earl Browder in his place or even Philip Murray would make. Yet these adjustments and compromises are themselves fluid and susceptible of change. For one of the characteristics of Roosevelt, whether in 1933 or in 1943, is his responsiveness to diverse pressures. This is a source of both strength and weakness. And characteristic too is his *reliance* on particular pressures to achieve particular ends. It may justly be said of him that at times he fails to lead and himself to rouse up the popular support he needs. Yet clearly there is here involved a reciprocal responsibility. For if those on whom the President has every reason to count as his most reliable supporters, who are most resolutely anti-fascist and most clearly understand the imperatives of the war and the peace do not respond to major issues in sufficient force, are they justified in blaming him for failing single-handed to solve what are the common problems of us all?

Consider, for example, the crucial issue of coalition warfare and the second front, which today overshadows all other questions. It is now known that at Quebec President Roosevelt and General Marshall argued for an immediate second front in western Europe. They were met by the stone wall of Churchill's refusal. Agreed that they should have crashed through that wall. But where was the irresistible force impelling them to do so? Where was the voice of the American people, of organized labor, of the liberals? It was a very small voice indeed. Substantially buttressing Churchill's resistance on the other hand, were our own defeatists and anti-Soviet intriguers, whose fear of Hitler is less than

their fear of a quick and decisive victory in alliance with the USSR and the peoples of Europe. "A full scale second front is beyond all doubt the keystone to any full Anglo-American-Russian accord," wrote Victor H. Bernstein in *PM* of August 23. But how much has *PM* done to build the movement for a second front? On the contrary, Max Lerner, who has occasionally urged a second front, was so swept away by the headlines on the Salerno fighting that he announced: "By converting Italy into a major battlefield they [the Nazis] are, in effect, letting us open a second front." (*PM*, September 15.) Hitler is fighting desperately to keep his western flank unbreached. But how easily Max Lerner is persuaded to yield up his positions. In fact, only one writer in the liberal press, Samuel Grafton, has consistently spoken up for the second front.

**T**HE forces in this country that are working against the second front are the same forces that are working for chaos on the home front and for something considerably short of total victory and a stable peace. They are strongly entrenched in the State Department, they own dominance in the last session of Congress, and they greatly influence the press and the thinking of even those sections of business that support the war. They are formidable adversaries. No American, least of all anyone who calls himself a liberal, can afford to be neutral in this conflict. And certainly no one with any spark of progressivism can afford to give them comfort. It is time those liberals who have been playing around with the idea of rejecting Roosevelt in 1944 face up to the alternatives before us. Raymond Clapper, Scripps-Howard commentator, took the plunge in his column on August 26: "It begins to seem as if the initiative, the courage, the imagination, the readiness to look ahead instead of backward, may come from the Republicans." As an example Clapper cited Clarence Budington Kelland's blueprint for brass-knuckle imperialism designed to convert the United States into the most aggressive, most hated, most isolated country in the world.

What the initiative of Taft, the courage of Vandenberg, the imagination of Spangler, and Clare Hoffman's readiness to look ahead accomplished at the recent Republican conference at Mackinac Island, Mich., is well known. I hope I am right in thinking that most liberals don't seduce as easily as Clapper. But he has, after all, merely rushed into the pitfalls that yawn before others that stumble in the same direction. The *New York Post* has recently published two or three editorials to the effect that within the next few months liberals must decide "whether to continue in support of President Roosevelt for another term or back a new liberal leader . . . such as, perhaps, Wendell Willkie."

It is no secret that the *Post* is practically the house organ of the right-wing camarilla in the American Labor Party. Such statements hardly lend weight to the right wing's indignant denial of the charge made during the recent primaries by the ALP Progressives that the Old Guard group was not only anti-Soviet, but anti-Roosevelt. As for Willkie, his answers to five questions in *Look* magazine constitute a platform of peace with the defeatists and reactionaries in his own party on the basis of a common struggle against the war policies of the Commander-in-Chief. The platform still is tentative and Willkie has not yet shut all the doors to his recent past, but the trend is unmistakable. Is this the alternative American liberals are willing to accept? If they are, it means a break not only with the President, but with the labor movement; it means isolation from the rich main currents of American progress and American hope.

If it is argued that those who pose these alternatives are merely astutely bluffing, using threats to wrest concessions from the President, I can only say that this makes it no less dangerous though more reprehensible. Such tactics are on a level with Walter Reuther's gambling with strike threats. The President is certainly not above criticism. He at times has initiated or tolerated policies which have been definitely harmful to the war and to the perspectives of the future peace. At other times he has failed to press for necessary measures which he favored, because he wanted to avoid a clash with men whose principal objective was to undermine the war effort and his own authority. He is often inclined to let matters drift and to act only when a serious crisis develops. But it is useless to set up in our minds the image of an "ideal" President and to condemn the actual President for failing to correspond to that image. Despite his faults, Roosevelt is the President the country must work with if it is to fight this war through to a tolerable future. Bluffs and threats directed at him only give ammunition to the enemy and demoralize our own side.

It is not only a question of 1944 but of today. Who can look at the present Congress, who can read the Hearst-McCormick-Patterson press, who can view the long road we must travel before we can say that we are bearing our honorable share of the burden of this war, and yet fail to understand that the Commander-in-Chief must be strengthened, not destroyed, and that the way to strengthen him is to build for him the power to beat down those who obstruct and betray, to counter the pressure of the appeasers and fainthearts with the greater pressure of the people? That isn't easy. But history doesn't provide the answers to its problems in the back of the book. We've got to work them out ourselves.

A. B. MAGIL.



APPEASER  
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APPEASER  
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HAPSBURG

George Pappas



ON ITS western side the height sloped down into the eroded gully, where there was a thin growth of oak saplings. Here and there the slope was green with blackthorn and hawthorn. Two deep ravines branching from either side were connected by the gully and Nikolai thought with satisfaction that tanks couldn't pass there.

The heat hadn't died down yet. The sun blazed down on the earth as relentlessly as before. A bitter scent of fading wormwood called up a vague sadness. Nikolai leaned wearily against the trench wall and gazed out at the drab scorched steppe, dotted with old marmot burrows. Glimpses of fathomless blue sky could be caught between wormwood stalks and through the smoky haze on the distant elevation, the blurred outlines of copses looked blue, hanging in mid-air over the earth.

Nikolai was tormented by thirst, but he allowed himself only one sip from the flask. He knew from experience how dear every single drop of water is during battle. He glanced at his watch; it was a quarter to four. Another half hour passed in wearisome anticipation. He was taking the last greedy pulls at a second cigarette, when the drone of distant engines reached him. The sound swelled and broadened, became more distinct, threatening like the rumble of thunder low over the earth. Then like a gray gown, a train of dust rose and outlined the lane that wound erratically along the gully. Tanks were coming. Nikolai counted fourteen. They disappeared into the gully, deployed, and assumed an initial position for the attack. Engines droned and didn't die down. Now, trucks with infantry were rattling through the lane. The last to

crawl in and vanish behind the gully slope was a squad of armored gasoline trucks.

Then followed those brief minutes full of immense inward tension that come before battle, when the heart's hollow beating quickens, and every soldier, no matter how many comrades may be around him, feels for an instant a chill of loneliness and poignant anguish at his heart. The feeling and its sources were familiar enough to Nikolai; once when he had spoken of it to Lopakhin, the latter had said with unusual gravity, "Yes, our fighting we do together and our dying we do apart and the death of every one of us is his own individual death, something like a kitbag with initials in indelible pencil. This rendezvous with death is for all a serious sort of thing. It may happen or it may not, but your heart beats fast as a lover's, and even with folks looking on you feel as though there are just two of you alone in the wide world, you and she. Every man is a human creature. So what do you want of him?"

NIKOLAI well knew that as soon as the battle got going this feeling would be driven out for others, fleeting, spasmodic, and perhaps not always within the control of reason. With a sharp intake of breath he fixed his attention on the narrow green strip that divided the gully from the slope. From beyond that strip came the engines' muffled drone. Tears started into his eyes

# THEY FOUGHT FOR THEIR COUNTRY

An excerpt from Mikhail Sholokhov's new novel

with strain, and his big body, that no longer entirely belonged to him, fidgeted and made dozens of unnecessary little movements. For some reason his hand groped for the disks in the niche, just as though those heavy sun-warmed disks could have vanished. Then he twitched the folds of his tunic and in the same way, without taking his eyes off the gully, shifted his tommy-gun. When the dry clay crumbled from the parapet, his foot groped for the lumps and crushed them. He parted wormwood stems, though his view was clear enough without that, and wriggled his shoulders. They were involuntary movements; he didn't notice them. Absorbed in his observations he stared fixedly westward and made no response when Zvyagintsev softly called him.

There was a sudden roar of engines in the gully, tanks came in sight. Then, marching at their full height and never bending, in came the infantry.

"To think of their blasted impudence—coming as if they were on parade. . . . They're going to get a warm welcome anyway! It's a pity the artillery isn't here—we could have received the parade in proper style," Nikolai thought, and his hatred was heavy. He caught his breath as he watched the enemy figures, small enough at this distance.

Cautiously maneuvering among the marmot burrows, testing suspicious spots with machine-gun bursts, the tanks slowly came

on, keeping with the infantry. Nikolai saw the hawthorn bush two hundred yards or so away, blown as though by a gust, the leaves and twigs shorn off by bullets.

The tanks opened gunfire while on the move. Shells fell mostly around the bushes and their explosions, like black fountains, shifted nearer the trenches. Nikolai pressed closer toward the wall, prepared to duck at any moment.

WHEN the tanks had covered the greater part of the distance and were reaching the bushes, Nikolai could hear long drawn-out orders. Anti-tank crews and machine gunners opened fire almost simultaneously and the characteristic dry crack of rifle shots punctured the humming of sub-machine guns. The German infantry, which for awhile had lagged behind the tanks, was still advancing despite the losses it suffered, until forced earthward by fire.

Now anti-tank gunshots were coming more thickly. The first tank stopped before it reached a clump of blackthorns. The second burst into flames and attempted to turn back, then stalled, raising the pitch black, wavering, smoky torch skyward. Two more tanks were burning on the flanks. The men increased the fire, directing it on the infantry, which was attempting to rise on observation—and at tankmen who were clambering out of hatches

and burning machines.

The fifth tank took advantage of the moment when the Borzykhs anti-tank rifle, covering the center, had fallen, and managed to approach within 120 meters or so of the defense line. But Corporal Kochetygov was already out crawling to meet it. Small and agile, he wriggled along the ground between the drab burrows and only the slightly quivering streak in the feather-grass indicated his tracks. Nikolai saw him spring to his feet, give one sweep of his outstretched hand, and fall as the anti-tank grenade, describing a ponderous arc, sped to confront the steel monster which was advancing with a deafening clatter of treads.

Then, like some huge unknown bird spreading its black wing, a thick column of earth slashed with a pallid fire rose and fell across the tank on the left side. With a convulsive shudder, the tank turned on one tread and stalled, exposing to the gunfire the side marked with a black cross. Immediately the Borzykhs anti-tank rifle, which had fallen silent a few minutes before, fired point blank at the damaged machine. The first shot brought smoke from the apertures. Its machine gun poured out a prolonged stuttering burst and shut up. It was evident that the tankmen didn't want to leave the machine, or were already unable to; a few minutes later ammunition started exploding and released the smoke

that belched through the apertures and the silent turret in dense foaming clouds.

THE enemy infantry that had been crushed earthward by machine-gun fire made several attempts to rise and each time was forced down again. Finally, it rose and advanced in short rushes. But just at that moment a tank swung around and retreated, leaving six burning machines on the slope. Then, from somewhere underground it seemed, Nikolai heard Zvyagintsev's voice, muffled but exultant, "Nikolai, we've licked them, the buggers! They wanted to bag the whole caboodle on the move, and we've swiped them! And we've certainly licked them properly. Let them try it again—we'll give 'em another licking!"

Nikolai reloaded the empty disks, took a sip or two of lukewarm water from a flask, and glanced at his watch. He fancied the battle had lasted only a few minutes, although actually more than a half hour had elapsed since they went into action. The sun was noticeably lower in the west, the fierceness of its beams had somewhat abated.

Another sip of water, then Nikolai regretfully removed the flask from his parched lips and ventured a glance from the trench. He caught a whiff of the odor from the burning iron and gasoline mingled with the acrid, ashy breath of singed grass. Tongues of flame, only faintly visible in daylight, licked the feather-grass tops. Charred skeletons of tanks, stalled on the hill slope, were smoking, and there seemed to be more hummocks around the marmot burrows. Only now they weren't all the same monstrous drab hue: from up here



many looked gray-green and much flatter. After a more attentive scrutiny Nikolai understood that these were slain Germans, and regretted in his heart that there weren't as many gray-green hummocks as he could have wished.

The machine gun's tap tapping carried from the gully, and Nikolai bobbed down again below the parapet. He turned his sweating back toward the trench wall and, resting thus, stared up at the sky. It was only up there that nothing had changed, in that coldly aloof, impassive blue, where a hawk was wheeling high with an occasional flap of its broad wings, which caught light on the underside. The white, shell-shaped cloud, tipped with purple and shot with the fairest mother-of-pearl, still hung in the zenith as though it had never stirred. And as before, the lark's artless song carried from somewhere in those heights and found its sure way to men's hearts. If anything, the misty wreathing of smoke on the far-off hill looked a trifle cleared, and its rim seemed no longer intangible, hanging in mid-air, but had acquired a deeper blue, a perceptibly roughish texture.

**N**IKOLAI was thinking that the Germans' second attack should start, when the tanks and tommy-gunners undertook a flanking movement. The Germans were evidently hurrying to break through at the crossroads and emerge on the road beyond the height. Tanks and accompanying infantry repeated with stolid obstinacy the frontal attack on the corpse-strewn slope. Again cut off from the tanks, the infantry dropped groundward on the bare slope and again the tanks tore full speed ahead toward the defense line. This time two on the right flank succeeded in reaching the trench. Both were blown up by grenades. However, one had time to crush several fire nests and, already ablaze, strove to push forward with a fierce, important clatter of its only remaining caterpillar tread. Fire came from its revolving turret, while over the red-hot armorplating blue-yellow glow-worms darted and the dark paint on the sides peeled and curled into tight little screws.

Now oblique rays of the sinking sun shone right under Nikolai's tin hat and kept him from aiming properly at the little figures that kept running in spurts and were sometimes altogether veiled by the sunlight. In order not to waste ammunition he fired in short bursts, and only when certain of hitting his target. After a second attack was repulsed, he sighed and closed his eyes for a brief instant with keen enjoyment. "Licked them again," came Zvyagintsev's hollow and this time more restrained voice. "Still alive, Nikolai? You are? Well, that's fine. The point is, have we got what it takes to lick them to the end? You beat them, but they just keep creeping in like one of those blasted tortoises in the grain field. . . ."

He muttered something else muffled and indistinct, but Nikolai no longer heeded him: deep-toned, intermittent booming of German planes claimed his attention. "As if we hadn't enough without that," he thought, vainly scanning the empty skies and mentally cursing the sun that dazzled him.

**T**WELVE Junkers apparently bound toward the river, were flying northwest of the height. As soon as he had guessed their flight direction, Nikolai felt certain that they were going to bomb the river crossing. He even sighed with relief and "They've gone by," flashed through his mind. Then almost simultaneously he noticed the quartet break formation and, deploying, head for the height.

Squatting lower in the trench, he prepared to fire, but he had time for only one burst at the plane swooping obliquely upon him. Then a short crescendo of a bomb mingled with the engine's bellow.

Nikolai didn't hear the explosion that shook the ground, didn't see the huge earth mass rear itself heavily beside him. For the compact blast of air swept the bank of the parapet forward, down into the trench, and flung Nikolai's head back. He struck the back of his tin hat against the wall with such force that his chin strap was snapped asunder. Stunned and half suffocated as he was, he fainted. He regained consciousness when the aircraft, having relieved themselves of their loads in two attacks, had long since departed and the German infantry had almost reached the defense line in preparation for a decisive attack.

Around him a desperate battle was raging. Men of his regiment were numbered now, holding out with their last failing strength. Their fire had slackened, for few remained who were capable of putting up a defense. Hand grenades had already come into play on the left flank. Survivors were preparing to meet the Germans with the last bayonet charge. But Nikolai still lay like a sack, half buried under the earth on the trench floor, drawing his breath in convulsive sobs. Blood, warm and tickling, was oozing from his nose. It must have been oozing for some time because it had clotted his mustache and stuck his lips together. Nikolai passed his hand over his face and raised himself a little. A violent attack of vomiting brought him down again. Then that passed. Nikolai raised himself sufficiently to look around with dim eyes and grasped the situation. The Germans must be near.

It took him a long, a tormentingly long time to fit a new disk with his enfeebled hands. It took a long time for him to rise to a kneeling position. His head swam and the sour vomit smell brought on sickness. But he fought down sickness and dizziness and the abominable weakness that robbed his body of will power. He was deaf, indifferent to all that was taking place around

him, but impelled by two overpowering desires—to live on and fight on to the bitter end—and he started shooting.

**M**INUTES dragged by like hours. He didn't see three heavy Soviet tanks and motorized infantry descend from the south upon the German motor vehicles on the other side of the gully. His dulled perceptions couldn't grasp how the Germans lying about a hundred meters from his trench had suddenly slackened fire and started crawling back, then as suddenly risen and scattered—not back to the gully, but northward toward the deep ravine. They were swept crosswise down the slope like grey-green leaves torn and driven by a violent gust. And many, like the leaves, lay indistinguishable where they fell among the grass. Zvyagintsev, Lieutenant Goloshchekov and some more men dashed past, leaping over shell holes, their faces white with wrath and exultation. Only then did Nikolai realize what had happened. There was a hoarse rattle in his throat; he shouted but couldn't hear his own voice. He wanted to jump up as he used to and run beside his comrades, but at every attempt to lean for support on the parapet, his hands slid helplessly, pitifully, like an old man's, along the rough edge of the trench.

Clambering out of this trench was beyond him. Nikolai flung himself on his breast against the parapet and groaned aloud. Then he broke down and wept in fury and vexation over his own helplessness, and in joy that here and now the thing was done. They had held the height and help had come just in time—that thrice cursed, the loathed enemy, was put to flight! He didn't see how Zvyagintsev and other men overtaking the fleeing Germans right by the trench had started bayonetting them. Nor did he see Sergeant Lubechenko, with an unfurled banner in one hand and a levelled tommy gun pressed hard to his side with the other, limp heavily on his wounded leg after the Red Army men who were far ahead. Nor Captain Sumskov trawl out of the shell-wrecked trench. The Captain, throwing his weight on his left arm, crept down after his men. His right forearm had been torn off by a shell splinter and, hanging by the bloody shreds of his sleeve, trailed behind him in a ghastly, clumsy fashion. Sometimes the Captain rested on his left shoulder a while, then crawled on a bit further. Every drop of blood was drained from that chalk-white face, but he still pushed on. Flinging back his head he cried in a shrill, childish voice that suddenly broke, "My plucky little eagles! My own right good lads, go ahead! Show them a bit of life!"

Nikolai saw nothing and heard nothing of all of this. The first star glimmered in the soft evening sky, but for him the darkness of night had descended in merciful and prolonged forgetfulness.

MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV.

## MIDWEST NOTES

Chicago.

CROSSING the continent, with forty-eight-hour stopovers in the roaring midwestern metropolises clustered about the Great Lakes, is like watching a kaleidoscope whirl. Details blur, but certain primary colors emerge. My plan is to gather up the details on the way back from the coast; so far I can give you some of the principal impressions. These consist, mainly, of three categories: relations with the Soviet Union; labor's political action; and the unbridled, frantic, campaign of the fifth column against FDR and the war's imperatives. I gathered these notes from frank talks with labor leaders, newspapermen, civic figures, and rank-and-file plain Americans. They include an off-the-record talk with the mayor of a large midwestern city, AFL and CIO leaders, Negro spokesmen, and others.

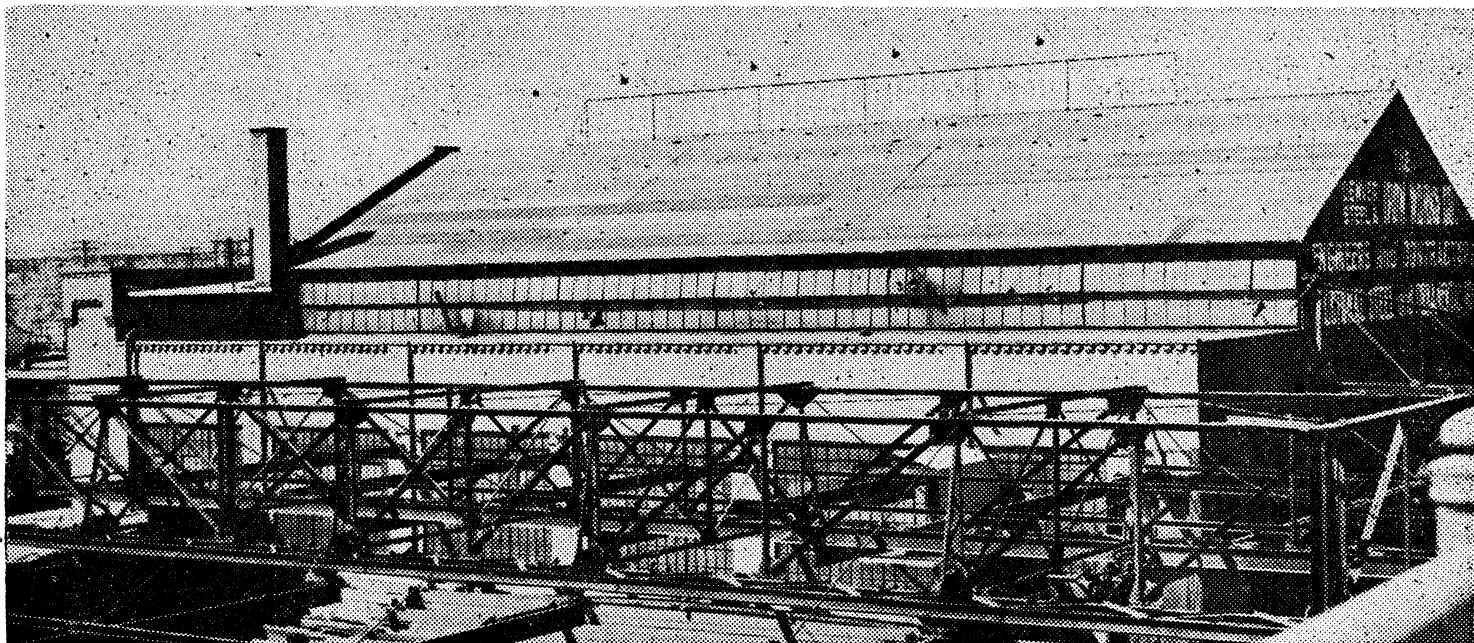
CLEVELAND, Akron, Detroit, Chicago: the khaki of war is a primary color, all right. Soldiers coming and going; they jam the trains and stations. Most civilian travelers are on war duties, too. And they—America—are not talking about the weather. The only ones doing that were some nervous military and political commentators writing in the armfuls of midwest papers I've been reading. "Will the rains stop the Russians?" Smolensk's fall last week killed the speculation in meteorology. News of the Red Army's advance continues to take big headlines, and comments on it increase. They begin to reflect the major discussion of our day: the issue of genuine coalition warfare and the second front. So it was in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Chicago Times*, and all the rest. In these cities, they tell me, it wasn't so a brief yesterday or two ago, as short a time back as the Quebec conference, which begins to sound like something from the ice age. (You can almost hear those nightly salvos in Moscow out here on the banks of Lake Michigan.) My talks with the aforementioned midwesterners invariably led to the phrase "revising the schedule." No doubt that will continue as the Red Army proceeds on its business. "How far's Joe going to push them back?" a

Negro editor in Detroit asked me. "All the way," an associate editor answered cheerfully.

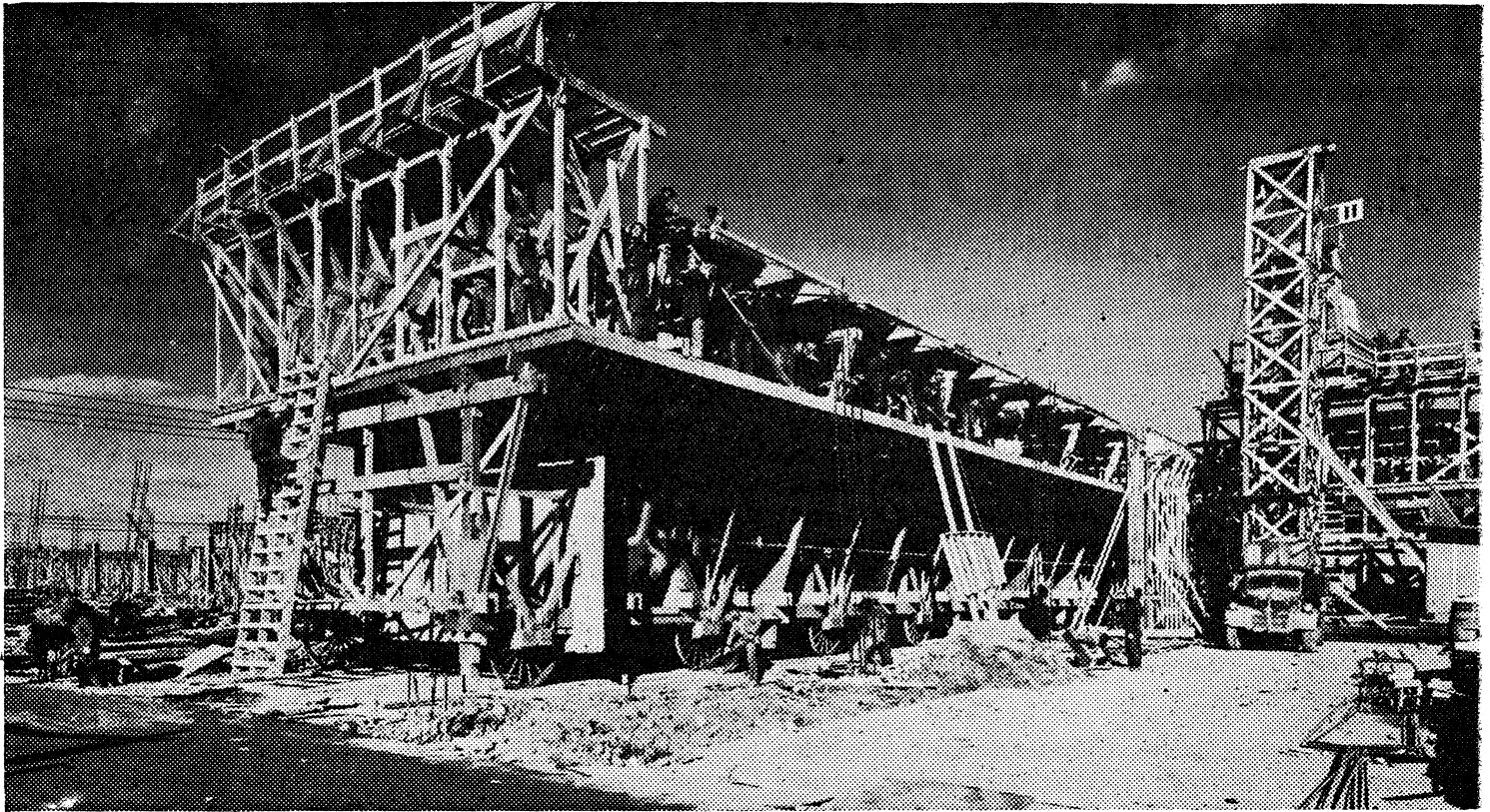
All I spoke with agree that the American people are not hostile to the second front—far from it. But they don't, as yet, see it as a crucial issue. If they did, things would be a lot different. So far sentiment hasn't crystallized into an adequate, aggressive program; but the *feeling* for Russia is overwhelmingly favorable. You rarely run into that "Will-we-fight-Russia" talk here—except from the fifth column. The admiration for the Red Army has deepened in the heartland of isolationism. Was it accidental that Cleveland, for instance, in Senator Taft's home bailiwick, the first city of a million population to go over the top in the war loan drive, is also the first city in the land in Russian War Relief? There seems to me a connection. When Mayor Loesche opened up the firehouses as collection stations for clothes to go to the Russians, garments piled so high that in some firehouses the hook and ladder apparatus had to be moved outside until the stuff was collected. I'll bet Senator Taft loved that. So would Governor Bricker if he could get the drift.

And I like the midwesterners' jeers at the Nazi euphemisms for retreat. You know the stuff. . . . "Our troops have detached themselves from the enemy according to plan," etc., etc. One Detroit newspaperman told the American frontiersman's tall tale which the Nazi communiques brought to mind: "First I hit him in the fist with my eye; then I got my hair in his hands; then I rammed my stomach into his knee; then I tripped him and pulled him down on top of me; then I got my fingers between his teeth, and started gouging his finger with my eye. All in all, I roughed him up until finally I got tired and quit." The sons of the ox-borne settlers here are telling that story about the common enemy who tangled with their great Russian ally whom they call Joe.

TO COUNTER this admiration, and the thorough-going desire for coalition warfare that it connotes, the fifth column here is running hog-wild. You wonder, inevitably, how long the administration will let Hearst, McCormick and the rest remain on the loose. You saw the way Hearst distorted Browder's Chicago speech. His chain had the screaming-meemies all the way across the country. And the plottings of the traitors in



They come rolling down the mountain from mile-high shipyards at Denver, Colorado.



Concrete forms on wheels save steel in the Dodge airplane engine plant at Chicago.

Detroit is blood-chilling. "We've got to give the damn n - - - another taste of it," a cab driver told me, referring to the bloody insurrection of several months ago. Three mayoralty and councilmanic candidates are running with Kluxist support, and using throwaways on the public streets that should have been printed in the Wilhelmstrasse. Listen to the argument used by Edward A. Carey, mayoralty candidate. Blaming the "riots" on the Jews, he called upon the government to "hold a Jubilee year in the good old USA and return to the gentiles and the colored people all the property the Jew bankers have taken away from them in the past through seizures, foreclosures, on mortgages and otherwise. And set this world of slaves free from Jewish financial bondage." Needless to say Hitler is not mentioned once.

Other candidates: Charles Bowles, former mayor who was the first to be recalled; he was a Black Legion candidate, and is running once again for the city's chief office; Virgil Chandler aspires for the council, with a federal indictment against him for his part in the Sojourner Truth troubles. He is a leading figure in the National Workers' League tied up with the Nazi spies arrested out here some weeks ago. "Detroit," the Negro editor told me, "has become the Axis capital of the Western World."

FOR all these reasons, midwest labor, I can see, is throwing off its old political sluggishness. "We've got to win in '44," they tell you, "or it's curtains." Sidney Hillman's political action committees mean business. In all major cities, the rank and file are awaking to the need to get the vote out. AFL and CIO leaders, as well as Railroad Brotherhoods, realize, by and large, they have no time to lose. "The blue-stockings are getting *their* vote out," a Cleveland CIO leader told me. He expressed impatience at the rate labor moved. The workingman, he said, doesn't yet realize his strength. The blue-stocking is even dragging his missus to the polls in the registration. But, unfortunately, the workingman hasn't yet the same sense of urgency, he felt.

But this is clear: a good part of the cure is the diagnosis. Labor realizes the headaches it brought upon itself by not marching to the polls in '42. They're going to march now. I

was mightily impressed, for instance, with the way the International Association of Machinists (AFL) in Cleveland, is operating. I read a pledge card the members are signing; it has a compelling dignity. "I pledge," it says, "remembering the thousands of American boys, many of them members of this union and other unions, who are fighting and dying for democracy's cause, for the protection of my right to speak as I please, worship as I please and vote as I please; I do hereby pledge that I will fulfill my duty as a citizen by registering as a voter. . . ." They use the radio, public forums, leaflets, pamphlets, to get the idea across. "The 'Hate-Roosevelt-more-than-Hitler' crowd in public office or out of it, can be defeated," Matthew De Moore, president of District 54, of the IAM said over Station WHK. That idea is percolating through midwest labor. And by and large, labor is overcoming its outworn differences as this idea gains ground. There are some saggy spots; the Reuther intrigues in the million-strong United Automobile Workers haven't helped any. Much of the speed with which political action will advance in Michigan depends on what happens at Buffalo, where the UAW convention opens in a few days.

So you see, the picture is mixed; a lot of light as well as dark in the scene. There is, too, an increasing awareness that the home front and the international scene is inextricably interwoven. You see it reflected in the "Letters to the Editors" sections of the midwest press. The McCormick violence has evoked popular discussion. Most of the letters, by far, urge "cooperation with our Allies in the war and after." As Sgt. Andrew G. Rengert, of Elmwood Park, Illinois, put it in the *Chicago Times* today, "The American soldier is the best advertisement the United States has. He gets along with folks everywhere just as we did back in England. The boys know this. They're not going to stand for isolationism."

I like the way a Chicago waiter said to me, "There's too much checker playing going on. You move; I move." He didn't like checker-playing among Allies. Somehow the masses in the old isolationist midwest have gotten new ideas. They seem to feel that coalition means coalition. Wherever in the world did they get that notion, Bertie McCormick must ponder in his tower watching the changeless gray waters of Lake Michigan.

# THE LIMITS OF AIR POWER

*Allied generals who keep victory in the clouds. The four phases that prolong the war. Key lessons from the first battles for Italy.*

**A**T THIS late date and after strenuous battles that should prove the contrary, there are officers in the British and American air forces who still hold to the theory of victory through air power. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur T. Harris, head of the RAF bomber command, has given public support to the DeSeversky conception of winning the war. So, unfortunately, have American air commanders in important combat zones. The most recent endorsement comes from Gen. Henry H. Arnold, Commander of the United States Army Air Forces, in an article published in the October issue of *Flying*, the magazine edited by William B. Ziff—a leading proponent of the air power school.

Arnold states his views as follows: "America's air doctrine for years has been based solidly on long-range bombardment. . . . We are demonstrating daily that it is possible to descend from the skies into any part of the interior of an enemy nation and destroy its power to continue the conflict. . . . Fighting forces have been isolated, their defenses shattered, and sufficient pressure brought by air power alone to force their surrender. Constant pounding from the air is breaking the will of the Axis to carry on.

" . . . the sky road to both Berlin and Tokyo can be utilized to the full to blast the heart out of the citadel before our combined operations take over for the final drive.

"Strategic air power is a war-winning weapon in its own right, and is capable of striking decisive blows far behind the battle line, thereby destroying the enemy's capacity to wage war."

General Arnold points to the RAF bomber command and US Strategic Air Forces as outstanding examples of the development of air warfare. (The term strategic refers to independent bombing operations.) Naturally, he devotes the great bulk of the discussion to the work of the US Strategic Air Forces, and makes it clear that in his opinion their success is closely linked with the use of daylight precision bombing.

**G**ENERAL ARNOLD exaggerates a little when he speaks of "demonstrating daily." As Bruce Minton pointed out in an article in *NEW MASSES* for September 28, there was only one Fortress raid over Germany in August. Whether the Eighth Air Force will be able to overcome opposition sufficiently to regularize these raids is doubtful. General Arnold assumes that this issue is settled, in fact, that "knocking the Luftwaffe out of the skies continues to be

one of our main jobs." He shows that during the spring, our bombers and fighters over Europe destroyed German planes in the ratio of four and one-half to one. "In order to hold their own the Luftwaffe would have to destroy our planes in the ratio of two to one."

These figures are worth examining. In terms of materials, labor, and so forth, a Flying Fortress is to a German fighter at least in the ratio of four and one-half to one, perhaps as much as seven or eight to one. So the numerical ratio which General Arnold gives means, at best, equal losses in materiel in the air. In addition, large numbers of Fortresses return badly damaged; from the newspaper reports it appears not unlikely that as many planes require major repairs as are shot down. With the limited repair facilities at the disposal of the Eighth Air Force in England today, it is almost as easy to supply a new plane as to repair a damaged one. Now let us examine the ratio in terms of manpower. A loss ratio of four and one-half to one in our favor in planes means that losses in airmen run well over two to one in favor of the Germans (ten men to a Fortress, one to a fighter—German pilots escaping from wrecked planes, crewmen killed on Fortresses which return, etc.). Considering the long training period and current shortage of trained Fortress crews, this factor is by no means unimportant.

**I**T is undoubtedly true that the losses in men and materiel are more than compensated by damage to Germany's industrial machine. It is also true that, regardless of cost, any actions by our armed forces to engage even a small part of the German armed forces are worth while, particularly in the absence of a second front.

The point is, if our air superiority in the west were applied to the support of a cross-Channel invasion, the loss ratio in troops would probably be more favorable to our side than in the one-dimensional air war—a fact which is not apparent from General Arnold's statistics. It is precisely the heavy loss ratio suffered in isolated aerial bombardments which holds down the number of daylight raids over Germany. Even with the Red Air Forces fighting the bulk of the Luftwaffe, the future of large tonnage daylight raids over Germany now hangs in the balance. The Commanding General of the US Eighth Air Force Bomber Command reports from London the successful experimentation by Fortresses with dawn and dusk raids, and the possibility that American planes soon might team up with

the RAF in night bombing, leaving daytime raids to "heavier armored, lighter loaded" daylight bombers. (This might refer to the special "flying hedgehog" fighter versions of the Fortresses of which General Arnold speaks in his article.)

Pursuing the thought that fighting forces can be isolated and forced to surrender by air power alone, General Arnold points to Pantelleria as the example. The facts are that the island was garrisoned solely by Italians who didn't want to fight us, that it had little more defense than Rotterdam, that even so the garrison didn't surrender until it saw the landing barges approach.

**I**T is significant that General Arnold devotes much more space to discussing the strategic use of air power than he does to discussing its tactical use (ground cooperation.) However, some of the men down the line in the air forces who face the practical operating problems have a more sober view of the situation. This is expressed in a very interesting article in the same issue of *Flying* which contains General Arnold's analysis. This article, prepared by General Arnold's own staff, tries to give a rounded picture of the "War in the Air." It begins by acknowledging General Arnold's theories and ends by demolishing them. Within the framework of air-power theories, it points out that land and sea power must win the bases for air power, and must have air support to win these bases.

"In the process of getting ready to fight our war in the air, the Air Forces have been compelled to take an exceedingly active part in fighting an all-out war on the ground. Paradoxically, our existing weapons of air power, Fortresses and Liberators, have been used more in support of ground and Naval operations than as a part of the independent striking force for which they were designed."

Last May, General Eaker in England was promising super-bombers over Europe this past summer. The staff article points out some limitations of the equipment which the Air Forces have, and are actually likely to have in service during the war against Germany. "The facts are that, until the present, 500 miles out and 500 miles back is close to the practical operating limit for a plane carrying three or four or more tons of bombs fast enough, and high enough, and with armament and armor enough to stand a reasonable chance of getting back . . . this operating radius may be increased during the next year or two. . . . But no air strategist builds his plans for today's war on what next year's equip-

ment may do." But with a 500 mile radius, England and Italy combined as bases will leave half of Germany, out of range.

**T**HE article makes the additional point that England is too small to base enough bombers to defeat Germany, and states that this was largely responsible for the strategy of developing Africa—with its wide areas for bomber dispersion—into a base comparable with Britain. (This seems to me rather illogical since Africa is more than 500 miles away from Fortress Europe.)

*In terms of the limitations advanced by this article, i.e. a range of 500 miles, and a wide expanse for airfields, only France would be suitable as a base from which to beat Germany through air power from the west.* To establish France as a base, a cross-Channel invasion fighting fifty or sixty German divisions is necessary. But this will bring speedy victory without a prolonged air blitz, and, it is to be hoped, put to rest the air-power theories.

The author of the article, while not drawing the above conclusions, from his arguments, is forced to end on a different note than the one on which he started: "Air power is not a panacea. It is not a force which by itself can defeat an army or capture an enemy's territory. It is no more independent of land power than land power can be of air power. Both forces must be used, and used to the fullest extent possible, before victory can be achieved and a lasting peace assured."

The proponents of unilateral air strategy, both British and American, would in effect delay the defeat of Hitlerite Germany for a number of years. The *New York Times* (September 19, 1943) published an article by Brig. Gen. Edgar P. Sorensen, Assistant Chief of Air Staff for Intelligence, which gives General Arnold's time table. (This article, an elaboration of General Arnold's arguments, also appears in *Flying* magazine.) The article describes four phases of an all-out air blitz. In terms of the descriptions, American bombers are somewhere between the first and second phases so far as action over Germany is concerned. The article claims that only by the end of the fourth phase will Germany be sufficiently weakened to make a land invasion (primarily for mopping up) permissible. An earlier invasion, it is claimed, would involve prohibitive casualties. When will we be ready for invasion according to these phases? The first phase took about a year. If the other three take equal periods, invasion could begin in 1946. To give an idea of the time involved, the fourth phase comes after virtually all vital industrial areas have been destroyed by bombings, and consists of cleaning up items overlooked heretofore, and rebombing those targets which have been rebuilt after previous aerial destruction.

The Army Air Forces have issued a chart accompanying this article with the

subtitled, "To Save a Million Lives on the Road to Berlin." Nothing of course is said about the millions of lives, both Soviet and those of the peoples of occupied Europe, such delay will cost.

The British Air Generals give a clearer picture of how long they expect to take. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur T. Harris told reporters that he believes Germany can be rendered helpless to carry on the war within four or five months by an air force numbering around 2,000 heavy bombers operating ten nights monthly.

Such a force, assumed to consist mainly of British bombers, would drop at least 100,000 tons of bombs per month on Germany. This is 4,000 tons more than the RAF dropped on Germany in the last twelve months, and seven times the peak monthly rate reached so far. Between the summer of 1941 and the summer of 1942 the tonnage dropped on Germany by the RAF doubled. During the summer of 1943 about two and one-half times the 1942 summer tonnage was dropped. At this rate of gain, it will be the summer of 1945 before bombing reaches the scale set up by Marshal Harris. If everything goes according to plan, therefore, German resistance would be crushed by the winter of 1945-46, with a Channel crossing at that time for mopping up purposes.

**I**T is unlikely that the Red Army, and the people of occupied Europe, to say nothing of the people of England and the US, will wait that long to give the air theorists their chance. For the present, all the air power advocates have to offer is the promise, via radio from London, that bombings of Germany will dwindle to small scale attacks during the bad weather of the coming winter.

The initial battles in Italy, especially Salerno, should teach important lessons to the disciples of victory through air power. It is to be hoped that these lessons, which probably cost several thousand Allied lives, will be taken to heart by the Allied High Command.

For a whole month prior to the invasion, heavy and medium bombers plastered rail lines and roads as far north as the Brenner pass. Press and radio transmitted the idea that German forces would be rendered completely immobile by these tactics, that they would be unable to offer serious resist-

ance to landings and to reinforce defending troops. However, resistance developed from what was reported to be units of three German divisions.

For the first five days of the invasion, our heavy and medium bombers worked on road and rail junctions fifty miles to the north and east of the battle zone. Other medium bombers and light bombers (presumably attached to the tactical air force), worked on communications to the south of the battle zone, in the line of General Montgomery's advance. This activity was supposed to prevent reinforcement of the Germans with men and materiel. Direct support of troops on the beach was limited to fighter planes; and such support was necessarily weak, since the fighters had to fly 200 miles from Sicily, and could stay over the battle zone only a short time. Our large fighter fleet was reduced by perhaps four-fifths in effectiveness, while the bombers, which can operate over longer ranges, were on strategic missions.

**T**HESE methods did not work. The Germans for several days were able to bring in reinforcements as rapidly as the Fifth Army. By the fifth day they were reported as having five complete divisions. Whether this limit was determined by transport or by the forces the Germans could spare for this action is uncertain. With no more than 120 dive bombers and fighters, all used for bombing and strafing troops, landing barges, ships, the Germans were able to do more damage through the air than the Allies in the immediate battle zone, and succeeded in launching significant counterattacks.

The tide was not turned until the sixth day of the fighting, when every plane in the Allied air forces, up to and including the Flying Fortresses, was used in the immediate battle zone to act as mobile artillery on enemy gun emplacements, troop concentrations, etc. Two thousand sorties were flown that day, including 600 by the heavy and medium bombers, overcoming the German superiority in ground artillery, and permitting consolidation of the bridgehead.

In earlier campaigns, around Tunis, and in Sicily, attack bombers were used as offensive artillery from the beginning of action. Why this was not done at Salerno is by no means certain. But so long as the great bulk of the offensive elements of the Air Force operate in a semi-autonomous Strategic Air Force obsessed with the vision of winning the war all by itself, such incidents may be repeated, with even more serious results in lives and time lost than at Salerno.

Long range air bombardment is an important military tactic. To win in battle, it must be used in proper coordination and according to a sane distribution of forces, with other forms of aerial tactics, as well as with ground and naval operations.

EMORY FALK.



# READERS' FORUM

## Letter from England

*The following is an excerpt from the letter of a British girl to an American soldier whom she met while he was stationed in England. Part of this excerpt was originally published in the North African edition of "Stars and Stripes," weekly of the US armed forces abroad.—The Editors.*

**I**T'S NICE to get letters from an old pal. At the moment I'm rather in the need of nice letters. The boy I hoped to marry is a fighter pilot and unfortunately didn't come back from a "show" the other week. It's hellishly tough but I just hope that at least he's a POW and try to grin and bear it. My nerves are in a pretty poor state and the Doc tells me I've got to go very steady for a while. . . .

Managed to get a bit of my own back at Jerry last week. I'm secretary to a couple of war savings groups and we had a campaign last week to get people to put more money into war savings. The object being that all money saved would go toward aircraft for the RAF. Little Sawbridgeworth aimed to buy a Mosquito bomber at 20,000 pounds and instead raised 30,090 pounds. Thus being able to purchase a Mosquito and a couple of fighters to escort it. Pretty good show. I set myself what I thought was a pretty ambitious target, 200 pounds from each of my groups and after slaving like mad eleven weeks to my great surprise I raised 323 pounds in one group and 890 pounds in the other. It took some doing, but I sure was proud of myself. Unfortunately it took too much out of me and I feel an absolute wreck. . . .

**I**HONESTLY wish that the USA and the UK were more friendly in their relations than they are. It's such a pity that there is a large community in England that pigheadedly refuses to see anything good in Yanks—it's such a darned narrow point of view. Though it's not so bad as when you first entered this war, it's still there and everything must be done to wipe it out. I'm pretty sure the same sort of thing persists in America and it does seem an awful pity. I do my best as a very tiny cog in gigantic works to stand up for the Americans and to point out their many good points whenever I can, but it's so darned futile at times, like trying to run my head against a brick wall. I guess the only way will be to have as many Englishmen in the USA after the war on tour as possible. Not luxury tours to Miami and New York. They're not the real America but to all ordinary places where the average American citizen can be met and talked to and his point of view shown, with no fool publicity stunts to distort the real basis of American life. Likewise I hope the Americans will come over here, not as soldiers, but as civilians this time with leisure to see our real England. For I get the idea that most Americans expect us to speak with "ultra-refined" accents and

to act like pompous snobs, which opinion makes us laugh! There are a few people like this about, but they get very small change from us. . . .

England is a pretty quiet place these days but a funny sort of quiet, something like the feeling we had after Dunkirk only vice versa if you know what I mean. Instead of wondering where the blow's going to hit us we are wondering where it's going to hit them. We know it's going to be damn hard once it's started but we also know that we're going to get them in the end. Preliminary blows by the RAF and the AAF are certainly going to save the lives of lots of infantry. Knowing how it feels to be under air bombardment we can guess at a small proportion of what the Nazis are getting in the Ruhr, but I, for one, am certainly not a bit sympathetic toward them. I only count myself lucky that I live in Hertfordshire, England, and not the Ruhr, Germany.

It's a grand sight to see the waves of Flying Fortresses going out and returning from their day's work with the June sun shining on them. One feels like blowing them kisses for good luck and waving at them on their return, but the conservative British always feel such fools when they do anything like that openly (crazy, isn't it) so we just say a little prayer for them in our hearts. We certainly feel when you see Yankees riding our skies like that, that at last we really are working together. We feel just as deeply when your aircraft are reported missing as when ours are. Whereas when you first came in we only worried about our losses—pretty mean of us I admit, but we are ashamed of that thought now. . . .

Wish I could see a little action somewhere, but as I mentioned in my last letter I let myself get in a pretty bad way with my nerves, etc., so it may be a while before I can get in the forces and get a little of my own back on Jerry. I'm starting a new job at Colchester, Essex, which should help to bring me back to normal. Hours will be pretty light and where I'm billeted is right out in the country, so should be able to get plenty of fresh air and rest, and I'll do my hardest to get fighting fit again. And as soon as I get the Doc's okay it's off to join the WAAFS or ATS or WRENS am I.

Love,

IRIS.

## Light on Churchill

**TO NEW MASSES:** I have read with considerable interest Earl Browder's three recent speeches on the crisis of the coalition. I believe that it was in his second speech where he contended that it was Mr. Churchill who sought to postpone a second front while it was the Americans who thought that such a project was feasible now. Mr. Browder's assertion seems to be borne out by a news report in the *Christian Science Monitor* of September 21. There Joseph C. Harsch, in discussing the General Marshall controversy, writes as follows: "It is a matter of historic rec-

ord that the original decision to move into French Africa in November, 1942, represented an American concession to the general tenor of British views. The American High Command has regarded the whole Mediterranean campaign not as the most desirable way of opening an Allied offensive, but as the most desirable offensive which lay within the immediate power of Allied arms and upon which agreement could be reached in the Anglo-American High Command. The American military view has been consistently that Mediterranean operations never should be allowed to reach proportions which would delay, or detract from the power of, the cross-Channel operation."

This is an interesting observation indeed and hardly consonant with Mr. Churchill's claims that the British and American military leaders have seen eye to eye on all phases of strategy. Obviously they haven't and I am delighted to see that it is not we who are totally remiss in fulfilling our coalition obligations. I am also certain that the Prime Minister's stubbornness does not at all reflect the British people's desires for a quick end to the war. Mr. Churchill has on past occasion shown a remarkable facility for learning the facts of life. With unremitting pressure he can again be made to see the light.

Easton, Pa.

GERALD LORIMER.

## New Cultural Magazine?

**TO NEW MASSES:** The train of thought aroused by your two recent articles on poetry prompts me to lay before you a suggestion. I've often felt that the lack of a progressive cultural magazine in America is a serious want in our life. NM cannot supply the lack—it has limited space, and has a job to do in the spheres of national and international politics, legislation, etc.

Last April Mike Gold in the *Daily Worker* said, "We haven't a single magazine devoted to literature, for example. . . . We of the left literary ranks should be the loud buglers of clarity and courage. . . . We ought to start a literary magazine to bring up the new generation of writers. . . . In ten years there will be a social literature produced in America such as we have never dreamed of. Let us prepare the soil now for the immense harvest." Mike is right.

There has been a lag in cultural work during this war. I think I know some of the reasons, but we'll skip that right now, for in spite of them, the arts are beginning to get on their feet and do their job. Theater groups are beginning to organize again, writers are coming through, painters are giving their stuff to the war, even Hollywood executives are responding to the pressure of public opinion. Not yet can we put out specialized magazines, like the swell *New Theater* of the thirties. But there should be one magazine where progressive short story writers, poets, dramatists, actors and directors, dancers, painters, photographers, musicians and sculptors can hold forum, exchange ideas and stimulation, and get published. The arts are too dynamic a part of life, too tremendously important to the war and to the future to have only a few last pages in NM as their platform. Progressive arts magazines have existed in the past—now all the forces that have helped produce them in the past, plus new forces, should organize a new, single, strong magazine. I have a hunch that Mike's right, and in ten years there'll be a social literature (read "art in general") such as we've never dreamed of. Let's begin.

LAWRENCE BARTH.

# LOOKING AT SCIENCE

by WILLIAM RUDD

*In launching in this issue a new department which will cover "Science," please notice that I spell it with a capital "S," but not with all capitals. If it were so spelled, it would be the little demi-god worshipped by some pure souls, a science operating only for its own sake, disregarding the world of human interests, and merely grinding out knowledge of no possible significance or use. The "Science" we mean is anything done in a busy world—by specialists called "Scientists," or just common sense, practical men—to make this a better world by the systematic acquisition and application of all kinds of knowledge. Knowledge is for the sake of happiness, and in turn happiness clears the road for knowledge. NEW MASSES, I feel, is the outstanding exponent of the new happiness. It is fitting, therefore, that it be as well the prophet of the new knowledge.*

## NEW BLOOD FOR OLD

BLOOD is not entirely an incidental fluid of the body. It is a dynamic, ever-changing and delicately balanced, self-sustaining system of transport. Not only does it supply nourishment to all parts, but it also carries off the wastes. Besides, it carries the secretions of the glands which stimulate, regulate, and synchronize a multitude of activities. The composition of the blood signals the situation with regard to the critical materials that it circulates. And, of the critical materials, probably the most important is the mixture of proteins found in the liquid portion of the blood—the blood plasma. This mixture of the proteins, of course, is ultimately derived from our food, or more exactly, from the proteins of our food.

The real pinch in our food shortage is the shortage of proteins of the right composition. The protein has to be sufficiently varied in order to supply a variety of building blocks or protein fragments, called amino acids—the so-called "vital ten." These need not come from one protein or only one source, but from the total diet, and there is no point in paying extra for what has been called "biologically complete" protein. Fortunately egg protein and milk protein are complete on any count, and may serve as a nucleus for the inclusion of the proteins of the less adequate cereals.

The proteins of the blood are in solution in the plasma. They are chiefly serum albumin, serum globulin and fibrinogen. The last mentioned is necessary for proper blood coagulation. All the proteins are needed to maintain a proper consistency of the blood, to prevent its leaking past the heart valves, to prevent the leaking away of fluids causing swellings and disturbing the proper feeding of the body cells. A lack of serum albumin especially will cause dropsy, show-

ing as a bloating of the tissues or what the doctors call "edema."

The loss of blood is a very serious matter indeed when food is not available or when it cannot be supplied fast enough. The military situation has accelerated research on supplying fresh blood plasma gathered from donors, to the wounded, or blood equivalents. The equivalents unfortunately cannot be the complete plasma of animals, because foreign proteins cause unpleasant shock. Partly digested animal plasma can be used for injection. However, the simplest approach is to use digested "complete" proteins, like cheese. Proteins and protein digests given by mouth can keep alive infants who, for one reason or another, cannot take food at all. Injection, however, requires predigestion. At least a dozen laboratories are vying now in preparing such digests or "artificial blood plasma." These will rebuild new blood for old. After the war they will serve as a basis for quick relief of starving populations whose chief lack is protein. The starving, for example, show a loss of half the normal seven percent proteins of the blood serum. Research is indicating that some foods are better than others for this type of rescue work; outstanding is the soybean, which is said to have a high "potency value." The most "potent" foods known so far are beef serum, beef muscle, milk casein (cheese) and egg white. It is thumbs down from this point of view on gelatin (jello) and meats like the pancreas or the kidney. However, the final answers have not been given. The tracking down process points that two amino acids, tyrosine and cystine, are the most important of the protein building blocks for blood regeneration. The latter contains sulphur and is present in highest concentration in the hair and the skin. A hank of hair might improve many a diet.

## SEX AND ALTITUDE

Flying or living at a high altitude demands an adjustment to a lower supply of oxygen at a lowered pressure. The body glands respond by either increased or decreased activity, depending on their role in keeping the body on even keel. Under such conditions the adrenal glands, two small bodies above the kidneys, tend to enlarge and do a bit of extra work, such as causing more sugar to pour into the blood to counteract fatigue. But glands constitute a chainwork and affect one another by messenger substances called hormones. The female sex hormones, known technically as "estrogens" or producers of heat (estrus) in animals, do pep up the adrenals considerably. Hence, reasoned Bernard D. Davis and Benjamin F. Jones of the Aviation Medicine Unit of the National Institute of Health, the sex hormones should increase altitude tolerance by means

of their stimulation of the adrenals. They injected large doses of a synthetic female sex hormone, bearing the graceful name of "diethylstilbestrol," into male rats kept in decompression chambers. The survival rate went up, even though the rats suffered the consequences of sex disturbance. The researchers were also in for a surprise. Rats whose adrenals had been removed improved under the treatment, showing that the sex hormone operates through other channels for defense. Most probably they pep up the most curious of all the glands, the pituitary, a thimbleful of magic flesh at the base of the brain. Moral recommended to the enemy: feed them sex (hormones) and keep them flying sexlessly.

## PENICILLIN

Excited friends of this scientist have tracked him to his country retreat with the question, "Have you heard of that new drug made from molds and such rot, which has a peculiar name like the word 'pencil'?" They say that it is a thousand times as good as the sulfa drugs." Of course, no scientist knows everything, and the best question with which to stump a scientist on the quiz program is some item which the layman picks out from the newspapers. In this case, however, penicillin is sure to become at least as well known as aspirin or caffeine or salvarsan. This really marvelous drug is extracted from a fungus called *penicillium notatum*, a bit of slime, in plain language. Somehow a little of this slime got onto a culture plate of bacteria at the University of London, sometime in 1929. Prof. Alexander Fleming did not hasten to reject the contaminated plate, but inspected it under the microscope to find that the slimy drop had exterminated all the bacteria around it to perfection. Then followed the usual story—neglect till very recent times, when two Oxford scientists, Chain and Florey, concentrated the active stuff, which in due time was named "penicillin." The magic concentrate stops the growth of bacteria when present to the extent of only one part in 25,000,000 parts of water. Such a small amount of material in such a huge amount of water is almost undetectable except by its effects. Penicillin cured animals simply oozing with bacteria and pus. Experiences began to accumulate on human beings who otherwise were hopelessly doomed to die. Where sulfa drugs failed, penicillin succeeded. We think that the results have been so remarkable that persons knowing of a case of blood poisoning, especially by the staphylococcus bacillus, should press for action by their medical friends and by the two firms, namely Merck and Squibb, which are already beginning to produce the drug on a large scale. The next decade may well see the end of blood poisoning.





# THE POETS REPLY

*Four views of a question raised in Edwin G. Burrows' and Samuel Sillen's discussion, "Challenge to Poets." Deeper problems than form. . . . A New Masses symposium.*

*We print below the first of the responses to the issues presented by Mr. Burrows and Mr. Sillen in their poetry discussion which appeared in our September 14 issue. Other replies will appear in forthcoming issues. We take this opportunity to renew our invitation to NM readers, both poets and non-poets, to participate in this discussion.*

## Norman Rosten

THOUGH Mr. Burrows and Mr. Sillen bring up a number of valuable points, it seems to me they both over-labor the "form and content" approach. I don't think the dilemma of modern poetry is acutely concerned with this problem. We must assume that the poet is sufficiently aware of the facts of prosodic life to solve the problem of the writing of the poem. That problem has always been with us, and deserves no special emphasis now. We cannot be concerned solely with process. We must turn to the poetry written. And it is academic to think of any work apart from the specific writer.

"Where are the poets?" asks Mr. Burrows. The answer is not that they are defeated by form, or technique, or an inability to absorb literary tradition. The answer is, simply, that they are not here. They are in limbo, or in their secret rooms conjuring up inward voices, musing over eternal and/or internal verities, viewing their own souls with alarm (in the manner of Lady Macbeth) and, above all, avoiding casualty lists. Here is the crux. The problem is the poet, himself, the person, the man and his consciousness of history. We are engaged in a great war, the scope of which staggers the imagination. Where are the recorders of this vast enfolding drama? Mr. Spender turns to mysticism. Mr. Auden is bored. Mr. Tate wanders through his medieval gardens. Mr. Eliot contemplates immortality. Mr. Pound is in a rapid state of decomposition and is waiting only to be buried. And the others are silent or unaccounted for. The "younger" poets are for the most part having a wonderful time in their curious anthologies, selected by one another, understood by one another, praised by one another, and after a while they become a School of Poetry (capital letters)—without very

much to say, and with the same way of saying it.

Either through their inability to interpret the epic forces of their world, or through plain snobbery, these poets have turned from a rich source of poetry. History is bunk, they say, I am the center of all things. They have decided to retain the cynicism or detachment or bitterness of the Munich years leading up to the war, for these attitudes had certain "literary" advantages. Often these were signs of style. Should our poets leave the intimate, safe, and personal moods to walk the bitter ashes of Dunkirk or Sevastopol? Do they see a valor or vision that is worthy of their art? I am afraid they are not concerned with such heroisms. They have been celebrating themselves too long.

The poet who stands before history and takes its inspiration and suffering to heart, he will be heard from. Carl Sandburg is heard from. And Stephen Vincent Benet was such a man. The underground poets throughout Europe, the poets of Russia and China are heard from. Here in America there are younger poets touched by that flame, and they will be heard from. There are always those groups who sneer at what they call "battle poetry." They are the boys from the best schools, self-appointed protectors of the Muse, sworn to keep her clean and courteous and calm. They have overlaid poetry with a heavy coating of metaphysics. But metaphysics never won at Tobruk, Bataan, or Stalingrad, three great poems of our generation.

It is not a technical difficulty that has silenced our poets. It is moral. They are, at the moment, without the urgency and will to meet the challenge of their material. Let those of us with that will work harder than ever. The time is come to put away our egos and celebrate the living world.

## Don Gordon

THE trouble with the recent discussion in *NEW MASSES* under the heading, "Challenge To The Poets," is that no challenge was hurled. Most of the space was ill spent in argument about form. Pre-occupation with form is as sterile as pre-occupation with the navel. The times are challenging but the challenge will not be

met by concentration on form—the whole argument belongs in the museum.

Acknowledge and deal with the living things today or become merchants of dead issues. Form, in art, is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end, a contributory and auxiliary factor in achieving an effect, a report, a communication, an interpretation, or a stimulus. Any form may be effective in the hand of an artist. In the hand of an amateur, all forms are as useless as a carpenter's tools in a child's fingers. What we ought to be concerned with today is content. Everything important has yet to be said, both in poetry and prose. Yet publications and audiences alike are living in the past. What is published? Greeting card verses, sentimental ditties—the maudlin, the academic, the precious.

The weakness of poets is not that they are obscure (only a few are) but that they, too, easily succumb to the classical, the Byronic, the hark, hark the lark tradition. Audiences are rightly bored by this, but do not express their boredom verbally—only by neglect. Publications usually cater to an imaginary idea of poetry their editors absorbed in childhood and never got over. This they foist on audiences who are much more contemporary in outlook than they are. The modern poet who wishes to communicate seriously is caught between these two meat-choppers—editorial infantilism and audience boredom.

There was an editor who during the depression said of a poem which he considered otherwise acceptable: "The times are too strenuous for poetry like this." Later he supported Franco.

It is true that there is no *mass* audience for poetry. But everywhere in the world there are people who respond to poetry that is itself responsive to the times. And everywhere there are people whose inarticulated thoughts cry out for the vibrant expression that poetry alone can give them. In a dynamic era like this, people simply will not respond to dull writing, to pretty writing, to hackneyed writing, to writing that evades the issues that are tearing them to pieces. Because of the very complexity of the period, the greatest simplicity is needed to understand it. This is not a paradox. It means that the vast welter of events, persons, things and places must be cut

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through and the essential meaning exposed. This has always been the special function of the poet whose mind, at its best, sees the inner core of events and their direction. It is still the function of the poet—and it is the real challenge to him.

WE APPROACH the great issues of war and peace on too prosaic a level. We Americans are always inclined to understatement and are panic-stricken at the thought of actually naming and discussing the things that are consuming us. And yet we long to see these things expressed, somehow, somewhere, as strongly as we feel them. That is the poet's chore, and that is another challenge to him.

Poetry is still the best medium through which to articulate and to transmit the nobility of the incomparable struggle in which we are all involved. It is the poet's work to attempt to give utterance to the tense and burdened life that surrounds us, to face reality as though it were an incendiary bomb he cannot escape and must master.

To tell the poet to turn to radio is not a solution, it is an evasion. Do you tell a painter to become an architect because houses are used more than pictures? Radio drama is not an answer to the predicament of the poet. He is not and does not want to be a dramatist—he is a poet. Naturally, poetry can be read on the air, and that is all to the good. But the values of poetry cannot be gathered on the run. Poetry must be read, kept, lived with, integrated into thought. It must be published and distributed in permanent form or it will sink to the significance of yesterday's soap opera.

Poetry dies annually in the columns of the critics. Poetry lives through all storm and stress, despite all obstacles, against all odds, because men need to write it and need to read it. Its life, however, is not an obvious one. The influence of poetry is often indirect and remote. Its titles, phrases, images, and concepts creep into language and into thought, conditioning men's reactions, enlarging their cerebral horizons, enriching their vocabularies in spite of themselves. When preachers, teachers, statesmen, or public figures generally, need to say something with particular clarity or vigor where do they turn for their ideas and phrases? To the poets, of course, to those who have summed up human experience for them.

All of us use the poets without knowing it. It is a use that leaves the poet unknown, unpaid, uncredited—a use that he is especially equipped to appreciate in his sometimes sardonic way. But it is a kind of life.

### Lawrence Barth

I THINK in both Mr. Burrows' and Mr. Sillen's articles there's too much to-do about form and content—in fact, one's

impression is that a discussion has been held on form *as against* content.

I think that poetry must have two things: *integrity of content*—that is, truth and decency; and *artistic expression*. In all arts, including poetry, one of the main foundation-stones is expression that is elliptical, different, subtle, colorful, imaginative—"poetic," in short. Without this quality, there would be no art, but only straight factual records of reality that would tell the mind something but leave the spirit untouched. Such factual work is very useful in certain spheres, such as science, legislation, etc., but it does not come within the scope of art. Art must give the facts *plus something more*. This, I think, is obvious and agreed.

Why, therefore, so much pother about form? I think a good poet could say good and true things in almost any form ever invented—or in a combination of them. (I take it that by *form* we mean the total technical means of expression: meter [if any], rhyme scheme [if any], typographical arrangement, choice of words, juxtaposition of words, creation of new words [if any].) Let there be flexibility! Critics usually speak of a young artist trying many styles and finally finding "his own" specific style. That's okay, if he really achieves his best work in one particular style, but would it matter if for the rest of his life he combined two or three styles in each poem, novel, painting, etc.? I think not, for art, science, nature—life as a whole—is extremely complex, interrelated and interadjusting. Nothing in nature is composed of just one thing, nothing has just one reason for being.

I see no reason why the progressive poet should not adopt some technical means—his use of words—from the surrealist, at the same time ignoring the over-glorification of the unconscious mind and the general introversion and negativism of the surrealist. Flexibility of technical approach will not lead to compromise of principles unless the artist is already a person headed toward selling himself out.

An important question that needs discussing in NM is this: To what extent can a progressive poet—or other type of artist, adopt popular commercialized forms in order to express progressive ideas, without sliding off the deep end and compromising his principles? There's much to be said for reaching an audience of five million instead of five hundred. In political practice, the abandonment of inflexibility and sectarianism has proved itself, considering the growth of the Communist Party since it first began adopting popular techniques of communication and a generally non-sectarian approach. On the other hand, mediocrity must be avoided; also, we must lead in *popularizing* new forms. This question is far from being solved for most of us. Let's discuss it.

Mr. Sillen's quoting of Dylan Thomas

prompts one final remark, which I make rather strongly only because there seem to be so very few progressive artists who bother to make it. I can never agree that *all* abstract art (by which I mean art that gives pure sensual, emotional effect but doesn't affect the reason) is no good, must go, etc. Marxist critics don't condemn music because it's necessarily a very abstract art, nor do they condemn Soviet artists' deep love for fields, trees, sun and sky—things which touch the senses sharply but the reason hardly at all. I feel, therefore, that it's a kind of overeagerness and lack of sufficient balance that makes some of these critics pooh-bah all abstract pieces of art. They associate them too readily with the self-engrossed and anarchistic type of artists who produce most of such art, and who produce nothing else. I think that abstract art has a place—it should occupy perhaps ten percent of our attention and production, as against some ninety percent of art that speaks to both emotions and mind. Possibly two hundred years hence, when rational society has been long established over all the earth, it will without danger occupy about fifty percent of artists' and public's attention.

### Osmond Beckwith

**A**BOUT Edwin Burrows' and Samuel Sillen's article on poetry, I want to be as brief as possible, but it's a big subject.

First, as an NM reader and union worker for about six years, can I be rather heretical without getting anyone angry? I'm a poet who works for a living—I don't think there is anything admirable in that—if I'd had an income I would be about as I am personally and possibly further along in my poetic development.

Please ignore what people call "egoism." A poet is most universal when he is most personal. I am not trying to write advice to other poets. All anyone can say is: this is my experience. People imitate what attracts them.

Burrows says: "the imagists taught us this. . . the surrealists taught us that." To me this is the wrong way of putting it. Inasmuch as I have loved certain "surrealist" poems I have learned something. To think in terms of poetic "progress" is fatal to a poet. I am speaking, of course, only about the poetry that matters—*original* poetry. To talk as if poetry is a better way of putting something and that therefore one should write poetry because—well, that is fatal too. I can't put this all down. It seems to be obvious. How can you say what poetry should be? Your only criterion (in that case) is what poetry has been—you aren't helping the poet but hindering him.

All the poet wants is something to move him—plus material help. I mean that a

poet will have a greater affection for a fool who lends him money than for an intelligent man who only wants to discuss what his poetry means to the world, etc. "Something to move him"—a bunch of daisies, a cavalry troop on the march, a peddler. Does the poet ask himself: is this a modern subject? (Or even: is this a proletarian subject?)

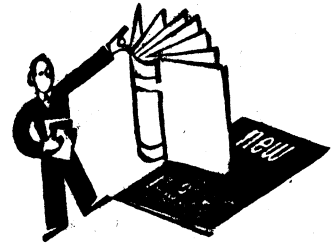
Examples: read what writers themselves have told you. Shaw became Shavian by writing plays like Moliere. Etc. The original writer never loses his originality by imitating—whether it's the imitation of somebody dead 200 years or the article in yesterday's newspaper.

**P**OETRY is the egg that has to be laid. It has to be laid whether anyone is going to snatch it out of the nest and eat it or whether it's going to rot somewhere in the backyard. Hardy said that he didn't much care what happened to his poems once he had written them. Without her devoted sister would we be eating Emily Dickinson? It is the *proof* of poetry that it occurs in this way. Suppose Shakespeare's friends hadn't clubbed together to make a little money by printing the folios? We really have Chaucer through a kind of accident. Everything proves that it is only the people who love poetry enough to save it and collect it who have put poetry into the so-called treasury of human culture. What I am saying is that to depend on an audience, to think about an audience, is fatal, or rather, foreign to a poet.

Poetry cannot—and can, in a different sense—make its audience. It makes its audience by being, first. The audience doesn't create the poetry. The poetry is made—then, as different people come into contact with it and feel its truth in regard to their own lives—why, there is the audience. With the true poet there is no question of writing down, or writing up—he writes naturally. Obscurantism? Plain directness? Every great poet is obscure and also plain and direct. Of course there have been theories. Action and reaction. But these are problems for the poet to work out alone—no critic is going to help him. If the critic criticizes he should criticize life—and then he becomes a poet.

It's all a waste of time. Sillen says "one could always start a lively discussion. . . ." I feel that his interest is in starting lively discussions. Fun for a while—but poetry is written on the Long Island sea-coast, or in a cottage in Fordham, or in your father's garden, or in a New York apartment. Criticism and discussion come *after*. Of course NM can help poetry—by printing it.

**W**HAT poetry *is*—well, look at Burrows' prize poem. Of course Ezra Pound is a traitor—but I'm moved more by a couple of sentences about Jefferson



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from the *Cantos*; for instance, a quote from Jefferson:

*I can further say with safety there is not a crowned head in Europe whose talents or merits would entitle him To be elected a vestryman by any American parish.*

What's the difference? Well, to me Burrows' poem tells me exactly what I already know. Pound's poem is *creative* scholarship. (But then people have often told me that my taste in poetry is—various bad names.) But we *know* the Declaration of Independence. We don't know that Jefferson was also a man of the eighteenth century. Or read Marianne Moore's poem, "Virginia." What's the dif-

ference? If you don't feel it, how am I going to make you? If you don't feel an *intelligence* in Pound and Moore and a mere summary of half-assimilated reading and other men's ideas in Burrows' poem—why, then, I can't talk you into it.

All I've got to say to the people who talk about poetry being dead, etc., is to tell them to read. You've got to look for poetry. You've got to dig it out from where it's hidden—in libraries, among the new books, etc. and etc. No one is going to tell you where it is. No one is going to tell you it is when you've found it. You've got to know yourself. Don't imagine it's going to look like a dog—it may look like a wolf. It may not agree with your ideas. But you are looking for *poetry*—not agreement. Or at least I hope you are.

## Books in Review

TRIO, by Dorothy Baker, Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50.

THIS short novel has all the suspense of a skillfully shaped mystery story. An apparently commonplace curtain rises on three apparently normal and harmless people in a blandly innocent setting—a tea party. The three are Pauline Maury, a professor of French in a western university, Janet Logan, her assistant, and Ray MacKenzie, a university student. Very slowly—in fact, it takes the whole book to do it—a darker inner curtain is lifted. When it is fully drawn perversion and corruption have been shaken out of their tight coverings, and a sinister situation reaches an explosive climax.

This is a story with a serious, if not immediately important, theme and a distinct plot. Both seem equally compelling as you read. Deceptively, action seems to rise out of character, and character seems, if not profoundly, at least maturely understood. Any vague anxiety in these respects is subdued by the swift pace of the book, and it is not until the last pages that you admit that the plot is as contrived as they come and that the one normal and two psychopathic characters are closer to an Alfred Hitchcock product than you thought. This leaves the theme (which, if you don't know it by hearsay, shall be nameless, since most of the excitement depends on not knowing what's up until the author lets you) about where it was before Miss Baker tackled it.

What Miss Baker actually does in *Trio* is a very smooth technical job. From the very beginning she creates just the proper mood for her story. Ordinary objects, ordinary words are cupped invisibly with sinister and indefinable implications. Suspense cuts in and out like a knife blade. Danger hangs over a teacup or a dish of cigarettes. Who is in danger from what and why—these are matters that Miss Baker handles with an admirable talent for making and sustaining excitement. But

as a study of abnormal behavior, *Trio* contributes little if anything to a field much better covered by the novel and the drama of the last two decades. The author's characters are well observed, giving a fleeting illusion of depth. But they are almost totally unexplored. They exist in no particular time and are apparently related to nothing except their immediate surroundings and each other. I have no doubt that this was a deliberate tactic on Miss Baker's part. But far from giving her tale a "universal quality," or what the jacket calls the "simplicity of great art," the method merely limits the narrative to the class of sophisticated and literate psychological thrillers. *Trio* is fun while it lasts—the reading time is very short—but it doesn't last overnight.

HELEN CLARE NELSON.

DAS VERLORENE MANUSKRIFT (THE LOST MANUSCRIPT), by Theodore Balk. Published in German by The Free Book, Mexico City.

THE newest item on the list of Free Book, the publishing house established by exiled anti-fascist writers in Mexico, is Theodore Balk's *Lost Manuscript*. Balk is a literary reporter with a distinguished career. He has written one of the best books on the Saar region, and he is one of the most talented contributors to the anti-Nazi magazine *Freies Deutschland*, also published in Mexico.

*Lost Manuscript* is something like the novel of the exiled literary reporter of our time. Balk tells the story of half a dozen of his manuscripts all lost in the storms and whirlpools of exile, war, deportation, concentration camp life, flight. But although it has the tension of a thriller, the book is much more than a personal history. The author, who fought in Spain, has a good eye for the causes of the present turmoil. His report on lost manuscripts becomes a report on the growth of fascism and the fight against it. This is political education and historical teaching in the terms of human experience.



# ENGLAND'S WARTIME THEATER

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I BELIEVE that the vitality of the theater is conditioned in the final analysis by its patrons. Before this war I think that was very plain. The theater showed every sign of cultural decay. Apart from one or two isolated attempts by certain theatrical enterprises, and one or two progressive playwrights who attempted to give some lead, there was next to no real development in the theater: if anything, perhaps, a retrogression, largely due to the confusion of the external situation. That section of the community which had the leisure and the means to support the drama seemed in those pre-war days to be easily satisfied with an uninspired iteration of conventional dramatic themes, usually in a class background, and far removed from the actualities of the situation in which they were living. Or else the subject matter of the plays which were most popular dealt with sex in its more sensational complexities, or with crime in its near-romantic squalor, or with neurosis. Now nobody will deny that a man may be a lover, a criminal, even a lunatic, but when such characteristics are portrayed on the stage to serve a merely sensational effect, the result is one-dimensional, fleshless and bloodless, spurious. The emphasis employed is then no more than emphasis, without significant relationship to life.

Yet always behind this facade the greater forces for the growth and development of life were contending, and an increasing number of people were becoming uncomfortably aware that there was something rotten somewhere. For however much we would like it to be otherwise, life itself is change, and any attempt to resist or to retard change will cause explosion. So with the theater: a theater which does not contain within itself the capacity for reflecting change is doomed to sterility.

Since the situation I have sketched, grave events have changed the face of the world. With those events many values, set traditions and prejudices have been swept away. Now there is a unity of interest, a shared experience of suffering and collective effort with a common purpose. I think few will care to deny that people's minds and their outlook have been lifted above the contemplation of the trivial and the spurious. There is, I believe, a sharpening of emotional feeling and a quickening of the desire for expression and release.

This must inevitably lead to a demand, however undirected and vague in expression as yet, for a living theater, for *real* plays and for *true* acting. The primary duty of the artist at such a moment in history is to satisfy this popular impulse.

But I do not wish to seem unreasonably optimistic. For this present opportunity can so easily be abused if the rising demand for entertainment is fed with cheap stimulant.

FROM the beginning of the war until today the theater, it seems to me, has passed through three phases. These have been described elsewhere as collapse, delirium, and rally. The collapse followed largely from the unfair and unnatural centralization of the theater in the West End of London, and was inevitable when the blitz closed the great theaters there for a time. Then came, in due course, the delirium, when the sudden upsurge of popular demand for entertainment set the managers wildly searching for what was thought to be safe, if not suitable, material to satisfy it. Then we saw the plunging into the rag-bag of the past and the wholesale revival of last-war successes. But these outworn old-timers could not last forever.

So came gradually the third phase, the rally. Companies of players—enterprises like the Old Vic, with a fine tradition of public service—began touring the outlying provinces. For the first time for heaven knows how long one of the best orchestras in the country, the London Philharmonic, went out bravely into Darkest England, and everywhere they went the response was magnificent. The people were beginning to show what they wanted by welcoming the best. The demand had begun: the supply must now be created.

INTO the foreground of this cultural stirring came the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, representing a valiant effort to satisfy the increasing interest of the people in fine art by sending out exhibitions of pictures, groups of musicians playing the great classics and lastly, the drama. This latest development has increased greatly in the past seven months.

It is too much to expect that CEMA in itself can satisfy the whole demand, but it is certainly leading the way to a fuller stimulation and satisfaction of this hunger,

and is creating an audience which will spread throughout the nation, if the good work continues as auspiciously as it has begun. By building up a high standard of dramatic taste—at first in a small way, and later (as we hope) more widely—CEMA gives a lead to the commercial theater, which will need to readjust its values to meet the new demand. There is already some evidence of such readjustment.

I have been chiefly concerned in touring the munitions hostels and the smaller provincial towns. Recently we took out two short plays of Bernard Shaw and a classic drama by Ibsen. We found by experience that in those towns where the Old Vic or some other persevering enterprise had done the hard pioneering work of building up a sound local tradition of dramatic taste, there was a very ready and vastly enthusiastic reception for the plays we took them. In other places, where no such pioneering work had been done, and local taste had been nurtured on roadshow and revue, we had a very up-hill struggle and played to poor business.

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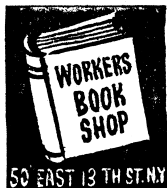
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was plainly there, and we had clear indications of an undercurrent of enthusiasm waiting to be canalized. The people are ready for good drama, and once they have tasted it, will be satisfied with nothing less.

THIS brings me directly to an important subject: the hostel audience, which CEMA particularly encourages and develops. All over this country are Royal Ordnance Factories, hidden in out of the way places. Attached to these factories are the hostels in which the people who work them are housed. Most of the workers are girls, who before the war were employed perhaps at home, or in shops and offices, and are now engaged upon tedious and often perilous work vital to our war effort. These brave, hard working girls constitute a specialized audience in many respects, because of their isolation in communal dwelling centers or hostels in remote places. They are drawn almost entirely from the working class, and are therefore, from the point of view of the actor, rather special, completely unsophisticated audiences.

Many of them had never seen a play before in their lives, so when we took the two Shaw plays, *Village Wooing* and *Man of Destiny* to these munitions hostels, I confess I felt a little nervous, although I was convinced that such audiences would readily accept drama of quality.

I need not have worried. We have seldom played to more receptive, more lively, or more enthusiastic houses. They did not miss a point of the fast-flowing, witty, but by no means simple dialogue, and they came to tell us afterwards that they had never enjoyed a show more. Later this year we took Ibsen's drama *Hedda Gabler* to some of the same hostels, and found the same exciting experience. Ibsen was a tremendous success. So much so in fact, that a demand soon came from other hostels, and we are now taking out a greatly extended tour to cover five weeks, when many other communities of workers will have an opportunity of seeing *Hedda Gabler*.

As a general principle it has been found that the best hours for performances are between seven to nine P.M. Owing to the three shift system, morning, afternoon and night, two shifts are usually available at this time to draw upon for audiences. In addition we fit in as many extra performances as we can, when the girls themselves request it. For instance, the afternoon shift returning at ten-thirty P.M. is glad to see a performance beginning at eleven-thirty P.M., and finishing about one-thirty A.M. Or again, a performance for those of the night shift, who for one reason or another were unable to be present the previous evening, may be given at ten A.M., on their return from work. Shaw and Ibsen at ten A.M! And surprisingly enough we soon found that our morning audience, which had been hard at work at the factory bench all night, was the liveliest to play to!

THERE is another interesting innovation. In the hostels the actor necessarily lives side by side with his audience and has therefore every opportunity to assess its reactions. The customary separation of the actor from his public is altogether ended, and there is the fullest scope for discussion about the play between the people who performed it and those who saw it. This discussion is not yet on an organized basis, but the opportunity is there for the personal exchange of ideas. In my view this closer and more intimate contact can teach the actor a more comprehensive view of life.

And here is another important point. We have found a very vital impulse among such audiences to identify themselves with the different characters in the play. The closer the character to their own experience of life, the more complete this self identification—which obviously makes for the fullest enjoyment of a dramatic situation.

In Shaw's *Village Wooing* (with which most of you will be familiar) the direct persistence of the shop girl in her battle of wits with the "intellectual" writer of guide books, found such an echo that I, in playing him, soon discovered that I was not merely duelling with one character on the stage, but with three or four hundred in the audience!

We found even, when playing Ibsen's drama, *Hedda Gabler*, that though his characters are remote from such a background, so closely did our hostel audience follow the dramatic development of the play that they sometimes commented aloud about the outrageous behaviour of General Gabler's daughter. They were quick to appreciate the deep human values of the situations and to draw the moral.

For there is essentially a realistic approach: as witness a remark made to me afterwards, when discussing the play, by one of the audience: "That was an exciting play—but my word, what a woman! What she wanted was a spot of hard work—then she wouldn't have had so much time to waste in messing about with other people's lives. She might have learned about making things instead of smashing them!"

IT MAY be helpful now to suggest the sort of plays which would appeal to such audiences.

The urgent need now is for new plays through which to reach that more perfect self-identification with the characters on the stage which is one of the more intense pleasures of the theater. The increasing size of the audience demands an increasing diversity of theme. The primary duty of



the dramatist, who possesses as his talent a heightened perception, is to interpret life in all its ramifications for the mass of the people who have feelings, to make the people aware of true perceptions and genuine feelings on whatever plane he chooses to work. He may write factual plays, plays about the relationship of individuals with each other and with society, or plays helping people to understand the present conflict with all its manifold dramatic possibilities, or biographical plays dealing with some of the great men in our history, and the role of the ordinary people in forming our traditions and institutions. But whatever his theme and however he chooses to write, there is no need for the playwright to subvert the heroic or shirk the melodramatic. Let him take examples of the fine heroism shown by ordinary people in the field of war, or civilian defense, or the family or the factory.

These are themes which can hold all the excitement and exhilaration now falsely stirred by the crime thriller—and in addition to this authentic thrill, can show something of the innate kindness and essential humanity of men, against the vaster background of the present tragedy, inspiring hope and giving encouragement for the future.

And let the playwright rejoice that at last he is freed from the set conventions which have ruled for too long in the theater. These new audiences will not limit him to three acts—or to triangular dramas in rectangular sets—or a country house background. He need not bother his head with labels—naturalism, expressionism, symbolism—he has full scope for any form which he can use with skill. He can write his plays any way he likes, to serve his purpose, provided only that the human values in what he writes are strong and true.

But while he has greater freedom in this direction, there are limitations of another kind to be borne in mind—limitations of material. Many of the halls and theaters in which we have to perform are lacking in elaborate equipment. There is no space for manifold settings and large casts. I do not defend such conditions, but they do exist, and if they impose simplicity upon the presentation of a play, that in itself is no bad thing, as it means that the spoken word unaided by elaborate scenery must create the dramatic atmosphere in which the play's action can develop.

Inevitably the supply will lag behind the demand, but my great hope is that the playwright may respond to the impetus and help us to make the theater much more a place of adventure—not a place of cheap escape from the realities of life. The playwright will do best to take hold of these realities boldly and bend them to his purpose, so that the theater may become again a source of inspiration, of understanding and of fulfillment.

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